

Maybe you saw this picture on the front page of the Plain Dealer Thursday morning. When I saw this picture, taken by the Hubble telescope my first thought was that someone had made it up with their computer. How could it be that out there beyond our sight are wonders like this, beauty like this. The more I glimpse of this universe God has created, the more I stand in awe. The colors of the rain forest, birds, insects, even flourescent frogs, the rainbows of fish above and below and around bright coral in the sea, human minds to which God has given the capacity to make all the marvels of the modern world, my ears and eyes and mind are stretched to their very limits as I consider the creation. And then St. John tells us that the one through whom all of this was made, became flesh and dwelt among us. God's Son was born of Mary.

After the angel Gavbriel had come to Mary to tell her of God's Son who would be her child, Mary went to see her relative Elizabeth. The child in Elizabeth leaped within her at the sound of Mary's voice. Elizabeth declared, Blessed are you among womane and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And Mary spoke the song that we know as the Magnificat.

My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Notice, when Mary describes herself, she doesn't speak of her purity, but of her lowliness. She understood that when God looked upon her God saw her lowliness and thus chose her.

Then she continues: Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

If Mary is to be called blessed by all generations, she says it is because of what the Mighty One has done for her. We humans always want to find merit in ourselves, to think that God has chosen to give us good

things because we are deserving. But Mary sings of no merit, no worthiness
that she possesses, only lowliness and fear of the Lord. You and I are
also most blessed when we know our life as a gift from God, when we know
that everything we need depends upon God's mercy. Even your very own faith
a gift to you from God, given out of God's mercy.

Mary sang on: He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered
the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the
powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the
hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

Mary sang of a world turned upside down, a song Jesus lived and spoke.
Blessed are the poor he would declare, blessed are the meek, they will
inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst, they will be
satisfied.

But more than all the words, all the songs, when God took the most
powerful one of all, God's own Son down from his throne, God lived MARY's
song. God's Son who had seen all that the Hubble telescope is now just
glimpsing, God's Son who was midwife to the birth of those stars whose
deaths make such marvelous sights, God's Son was born a homeless one that
night. A lowly servant girl was his mother. A manger was his bed, the
cattle's hay his mattress. God not only turned this world upside down but
heaven and earth upside down as well. The creator of all born a little
baby, weak, fragile. Though heaven was his home, on earth he would end up
homeless, saying, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the
Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

I always thought Christmas was something God did to the rich and the
powerful and the proud, Mary's song a sign of How God was going to bring
them down.

But no, Mary sings of what God does to God, coming down off the throne
to enter Mary and you. Amen.