



## **Saturday of the Third Week of Advent**

Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior, for he has looked upon his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: The Almighty has done great things for me, and Holy is his name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm and has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever." Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home.

**Introductory Prayer:** I love you, Lord, for you have loved me first. You have allowed me to see your provident hand in so many events of my life; how can I not believe in you? These days of Advent have slipped away so quickly. You are almost at my doorstep, ready to knock. I want to be ready for your arrival on Christmas Day. Therefore, I pour out my humble plea before you.

**Petition:** Lord Jesus, mark my life with gratitude.

**1. The Key Word:** The Magnificat, and indeed the entire history of salvation, can be summarized in the word "favor". This is the true motive of Christmas. God looks with favor (or good will) upon mankind. Many times, we see our spiritual life as the effort we make to become pleasing in God's eyes, drawing his blessings down upon us. This

would mean that in some way we bring about our own growth in holiness. This is not the case: God is never “obliged” to grant us his grace. We do not “deserve” anything from God. Our spiritual life should consist in presenting ourselves before God as we truly are: sinners. By placing our weakness before his omnipotence, we draw down his favor to lift us up from our misery and to adopt us as his children. This is what happened as he “looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant (Mary).”

**2. The Gift of Himself:** To demonstrate his immense love for us and to give himself to us, God becomes one of us. Love makes us seek to become more like our beloved. How could God become more like his beloved creature? He not only became man, but he shared the lot of the poorest of the poor. Very few humans, even among the paupers, have been born in a stable. How many babies are laid in the feeding trough of a cow or horse? Well, that is exactly what a manger is. Though he was rich (he was God almighty), he became poor, to enrich us with his poverty. We need to ask ourselves: what we are doing to become more like our beloved? What are we doing to imitate Christ in his gift of self? Have we learned to put aside our whims and fancies in order to do the things that are pleasing to our spouse, children or parents? These are the ways to prepare ourselves for a grace-filled Christmas.

**3. Abundant Blessings:** The rest of the Magnificat is a glorification of God, recognizing the favors he bestows upon those who love him. All generations will call us “blessed.” God will show the might of his arm, he will lift up the lowly, and the hungry he will fill with good things... We truly have so much for which to be thankful. The challenge of our Christian lives is to be mindful of our blessings and mark our actions with the seal of gratitude. We glorify God and we bless God when we try to respond according to all the good he has done in our lives. Then in turn, others will call us blessed, because our filial attitude opens the door for God to enter in and do still more good through us. Do I count my many blessings often? Do I truly seek to “repay” God by cooperating, and am I aware that in return he will bring about still more good and bless me more?

**Conversation with Christ:** Lord, as I prepare my soul for your coming this Christmas, I invite you to enter my humble dwelling. Please do not pass by without bestowing your blessings upon my poor soul. I need your grace. I will not leave your presence today without at least a crumb from your banquet. Allow me to thank and praise you for your infinite mercy as you look upon your lowly servant.

**Resolution:** Today, out of gratitude for the many blessings I have received, I will give something good to someone in need.