

Magnify the Lord with Me

SAINTE AUGUSTINE BEGINS the narrative of God's mercy towards himself by confessing, "You are great, O Lord, and greatly to be praised: great is your power and to your wisdom there is no limit. And man, who is part of your creation, wishes to praise you. ... You arouse him to take joy in praising you, for you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." This echoes Saint Paul's teaching in Ephesians, Chapter 1, where "he briefly mentions the end of one's predestination and vocation, namely, the praise of God. Thus, he states *that we may be for the praise of his glory, we who have hoped in Christ*. Through us, who believe in Christ, the glory of God is extolled. ... The praise of God's glory, as Ambrose remarks, occurs when many persons are won over to the faith, as a doctor's glory is a large clientele and their cure." (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Ephesians*)

In order to regenerate dysfunctional human nature wounded and diseased by sin, the Father sent his Beloved Son to be our divine Physician, curing us by means of his own wounds and death, and by his Resurrection, to bring forth *from the travail of Creation a new heavens and a new earth*. And so, *to the praise of his glorious grace*,

the Virgin Mary—whom he had preserved from original sin—lovingly accepted *the purpose of his will*, so that he could become a part of his own cre-

ation. Thus, through her, "[t]he Redeemer of man, Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and of history" (Pope Saint John Paul II), and as Mediator and Priest, he is the supreme "Praise of Glory."

"God could give no greater gift to man than to make his Word, through Whom He created all things, their head and to join them to Him as His members, so that the Word might be both Son of God and son of man, one God with the Father, and one man with all men ... [O]ur Lord Jesus Christ ... prays for us as our priest, He prays in us as our head, He is the object of our prayers as God" (Saint Augustine, *Commentary on Psalm 85*). "All praise of God," wrote Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, "is through, with, and in Christ. The prayer of the Church is the prayer of the ever-living Christ."

Our glorification of God begins now, here on earth finding its "source and summit" in the Sacred Liturgy of the eternal High Priest and Lamb. This also includes not only the canonical public and communal worship, but also the personal and contemplative: "[A]ll authentic prayer is prayer of the Church. ... for it is the Holy Spirit



The Visitation, by Carl Heinrich Bloch, 1866.

living in the Church that intercedes for every individual soul with *sighs too deep for words*. (ibid.)

The Holy Spirit had led another Carmelite in Dijon, France, to discover the meaning of her vocation to a life of prayer in the epistle of her “dear Saint Paul” to the Ephesians. As a result, Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity adopted his phrase, “*Laudem gloriae*”—praise of glory—as the new name, inscribed on the white stone that the Lord would give her in eternity (cf. Rev 2:17). Thus, “in the heart of the Church Militant” and “in the Church Triumphant” she would “unceasingly fulfill ... The Praise of Glory of the Holy Trinity.” *Through, with, and in* “our adored Master,” “the One crucified by Love!” But she also found another exemplar of this ideal. “After Jesus Christ ... there is one who was also the great praise of glory of the Holy Trinity. She responded fully to the divine election of which the Apostle speaks: she was always ‘pure, immaculate, and without reproach’ in the eyes of God.”

Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, the Lord was with the Virgin ‘Daughter of David’ from the first moment of her existence. *In the fullness of time*, He had asked her to allow Him to be with her in a marvelous new way—so that He could be the promised Immanuel—“*God-with-us*” as a fellow human being. Zechariah’s wife praised Mary for the faith and trust that she had in God’s word to her from the angel—a faith greater than Elizabeth’s husband, or even that of Abraham! The humble Virgin, now miraculously Mother of the Lord, accepted her elder cousin’s praise graciously—no false humility in Mary!—but she immediately raised it up from herself to the Almighty One Who had created her out of nothing, and who had made her the most blessed of all women—and of all who *hear the word of God and do it*. And, though all generations will bless her as Elizabeth had done, Mary, “the exalted Daughter of Zion” (Vatican II, *Lu-*

men gentium), still continues to offer up all honor given to her to the One God Whom she adores and *loves with all her heart, mind, and strength*.

“*O magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt his name together.*” (Psalm 34:3)

Since Jesus gave His Mother to us from the cross to be ours also, she wants to nurture us on His salvific mysteries and grace, to encourage us to participate in the “Prayer of the Church ... the prayer of the ever-living Christ.” For she loves her neighbor as herself—or better, as His most perfect disciple, she loves us as Jesus Himself loves us. In addition, the Mother of God and of the Church invites us to pray with her: “the Rosary of the Virgin Mary ... is an echo of the prayer of Mary, her perennial *Magnificat* for the redemptive Incarnation that began in her virginal womb,” wrote Pope Saint John Paul II. Moreover,

each decade ends with the *praise of Glory*: “Trinitarian doxology is the goal of all Christian contemplation. For Christ is the way that leads us to the Father in the Spirit.” (Ibid.)

With her, we ponder in our hearts the life-giving deeds and words of *God our Savior* that she made possible by her cooperation with His will, which she witnessed and heard. The Gospel dwells ever fresh in her Spirit-filled, diamond clear memory. The act of remembering is an essential element for giving thanks and praise, both for the good things God has given and has done for oneself and for others—as exemplified in the *Magnificat*, or in Saint Augustine’s *Confessions*. Thus, our good Mother Mary does everything she can to bring us to the fulfillment of our great destiny: to become in Christ Jesus “praises of glory,” *as we will for ever behold the glory of the Lord, being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another* (cf. 2 Cor 3:18). Amen! Alleluia!



St. Elizabeth of the Trinity



St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross

