



*Those gathered begin with the Sign of the Cross, saying:*

✠ Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

### The Cantic of Mary (Luke 1:46–55)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my savior  
for he has looked with favor on 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,  
he 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 has remembered his promise of mercy,  
the promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

### Reading

*Luke 1:26–29, 38*

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

### Reflection

The astonishing news from the angel Gabriel is followed by a second announcement: Mary's cousin Elizabeth will also conceive and bear a son in her old age. The salvific plan of God chooses two unlikely human vessels, a young virgin and an elderly woman. Both women will bring forth a child that will change the course of history for the people of God. Mary's hesitant but willing fiat leaves us with an example of obedience to God's call to each of us to be bearers of new life into the world.

### Prayers

*others may be added*

Trusting in Christ, the Light of the World, we pray:

◆ Be with us, O Lord.

That the Church always proclaim the word of God with a spirit of enthusiasm, we pray: ◆ That those who are hesitant to trust in the mercy of God, find strength in the Holy Spirit, we pray: ◆ That our Lenten practices continue to bring us closer to a repentant heart, we pray: ◆ That catechumens and catechists discover the astonishing love of God on their journey, we pray: ◆

*Gathering these and all unspoken prayers into one, we pray as Jesus taught us:*

*Our Father . . .*

God, in your plan of salvation,  
you have chosen Mary as the vessel for the Word made flesh.  
Grant to us the same courage as Mary  
that we might be obedient to your grace  
and faithful in our communion  
with your Son, Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

*Making the Sign of the Cross, saying:*

✠ Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.