

Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:39-56)

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Guidelines (For Groups): Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

Ignatian Meditation Process: Ignatius chose this Gospel reading for Week 2 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then "Ask for the grace". Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what's going on. Don't analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a "colloquy" (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

Introduction: When we think about the birth of Christ it's easy to forget that Mary is a teenage girl who is pregnant outside of marriage. At first nobody believes her story about a miraculous virgin birth. Not even her fiancée or parents. Given her stress and her hormones, surely she is quite emotional! She hurries off to verify the angel's word that her cousin Elizabeth is indeed pregnant in her old age. What a blessing of affirmation Mary receives! What a glorious song she sings to the Lord! She is inspired by Hannah's song in the Old Testament. She in turn inspires the message of her son who is the Savior and Lord for her and for the whole world.

Ask For the Grace: Divine Majesty, I ask for the grace I desire: that I may not be deaf to your call, but ready and diligent to accomplish your most holy will.

Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: Luke 1 (MSG)

39-45 Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly,

You're so blessed among women, and the babe in your womb, also blessed! And why am I so blessed that the mother of my Lord visits me? The moment the sound of your greeting entered my ears, The babe in my womb skipped like a lamb for sheer joy. Blessed woman, who believed what God said, believed every word would come true!

46-55 And Mary said,

I'm bursting with God-news; I'm dancing the song of my Savior God. God took one good look at me, and look what happened — I'm the most fortunate woman on earth! What God has done for me will never be forgotten, the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others.

His mercy flows in wave after wave on those who are in awe before him. He bared his arm and showed his strength, scattered the bluffing braggarts. He knocked tyrants off their high horses, pulled victims out of the mud. The starving poor sat down to a banquet; the callous rich were left out in the cold. He embraced his chosen child, Israel; he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high. It's exactly what he promised, beginning with Abraham and right up to now.

56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then went back to her own home.

1st Reading: Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don't seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with or are you a bystander?

2nd Reading: Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?