

# **THE LITTLE BLUE BOOK:**

A Blueprint for Radical Change

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<sup>2</sup>  
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## The Little Blue Book

A growing disquiet about the current world situation beckons us to seek a model of change who is humble, inspiring, enthusiastic, and compassionate. We need someone who is one of us; we want an inspiring person who can lead; we look for a faithful person who has the Spirit within; and we want someone so transparent that we realize he or she has weathered suffering and remains merciful and compassionate. The Virgin Mary has helped in the transformational salvation event through a simple "fiat" (let it be so); Mary's song of praise, the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-54), proclaims a new creation, a coming of God. Thus Mary's proclamation can inspire us to *Reclaim the Commons*.<sup>1</sup> Mary's proclamation is a revolutionary prayer of the Church or, in the words of John Paul II, *the prophetic announcement of the mystery of the total salvation of humanity*. Christians are called to bear Christ to others by direct involvement in salvation history, which has expanded in recent years to include our human-induced wounded planet. Mary leads; we follow as faithful Christ-bearers.

Mary's song contains the following components of a radical change leading to

*Reclaiming the Commons*: thanksgiving, joy and blessings; compassionate non-violence and grass-rooted participation; and appropriate service to others. The following reasons allow us to focus on the duty that we reflect on the words of this *Magnificat*:

- \* Change cries out because a time of deliverance is at hand (e.g., the gap between the rich and poor continues to widen; demand for resources grows as millions of Asians and others enter into the overly-consuming middle class; some scientists predict a 3.5 or higher degree Celsius rise in temperature in this century);

- \* The world's lowly majority respects Mary: two billion Christians along with a slightly smaller number of Moslems;

- \* Compulsive reactionaries against big government cannot call this demand for change "Marxist," if *Reclaiming the Commons* is biblically-based AND inspired;

- \* Mary's song, the *Magnificat*, is regarded as a liberation hymn that addresses the poor and lowly of the world;<sup>2</sup>

- \* Mary's whole being is one of giving

service to and for others in humble ways --  
and God's ongoing favor is upon her;

\* Mary is aware of urgent times, and *Now is the acceptable time* (II Cor 6:1-4) for us all;

\* Mary appears to very poor people (at Guadalupe, LaSalette, Lourdes, Fatima, etc.), calling for conversion;

\* A personal closeness to Mary has been experienced at Masses in the Manchester, Kentucky prison with Hispanic prisoners; and

\* We must confer on the *Magnificat* the meaning of our times with responsibility and creativity as a democratic people.

*To her who is Mary,  
because she is full of grace.  
To her who is full of grace,  
because she is with us.  
To her who is with us,  
because the Lord is with her.<sup>3</sup>*

## **1) The Creation Moment: Thankfulness and Blessings**

*My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,  
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.<sup>4</sup>*

### **Mary is joyously thankful.**

Mary proclaims the greatness of God in her whole being through praise, exaltation and glorification. Her very existence is the primary privilege in which all creation participates and in which she shows exaltation in a way that only human beings can do. Free human beings can proclaim that greatness through signs of gratitude wherein the divine greatness can shine like a special light in a world of shadows. In her joy, Mary establishes an environment of total gratitude, a sense of profound respect for what God has done for her. Through her purity and transparency, Mary manifests the openness to a total act of freedom, an act that allows her to make great or "magnify" the Creator of all. And such is pure joy.

God gives to Mary a special privilege to participate in the monumental moment of salvation history, to be through obedience a

new Eve, to be the mother of the Messiah, to be the flesh and blood wherein the divine and human kiss. The entire being of Mary manifests God's majesty, power and mercy in the creative act that now reaches an apogee in the conception and birth of the Lord. *Rejoice, so highly favored!* (Luke 1:28) Mary, full of grace, is a pure crystal from which the Divine Light within now shines forth. The Christ within allows her whole being to magnify God's love for us all; her whole being shines as a unique jewel. Mary exalts with the joyful words, "Let it be," a total act of surrender to God's will, a moment of **enthusiasm** or "the God within." Mary sees the greatness of God as giver of good gifts and, in an atmosphere of utter thankfulness, she shows the power of God in her joyful song.

Mary magnifies the Lord in three ways: in her immaculate condition she needs no purification and so her joy and love exceed those of other human beings in glorifying God's presence; Mary shares this presence with her neighbor (her cousin Elizabeth); the sharing becomes a public and magnifying act; Mary has within her womb the Lord and thus, during his gestation, Mary helps to physically magnify the Lord. Spiritually and physically an Incarnation event occurs, and Mary helps

make this happen.

*For you have looked with favor  
upon your lowly servant,  
and from this day forward  
all generations will call me blessed.*

Mary recognizes her own unique station as a humble handmaid (servant); she experiences her utter unworthiness in earning a part of the mystery of salvation. *I am the handmaid of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me* (Luke 1:38). Divine greatness shines through Mary's lowliness because she realizes her station is not from her own or any human source.

Mary blesses God in the *Magnificat*; she will be blessed by all in relation to both Incarnation and Redemption. Mary sees that her call to be the Lord's handmaid is a blessing, and her immediate response is a blessing. The first blessing is from God before human effort; the second is through God's grace as her accepting words extend blessing back to God. Mary acknowledges God as origin of all blessings; God is the divine Source of her being able to recognize gifts given -- and thus this double blessing is humbling. Mary receives the public proclamation of

blessing through her cousin Elizabeth's words, and then from all who through future generations will proclaim her "Blessed Mary." Jesus, her gestating blessing, is in birth to be revealed to a waiting world. All creation is blessed by the unfolding act of salvation.

*For you, the Almighty,  
have done great things for me,  
and holy is your name.*

Mary's profound humility is manifested by her proclaiming that these "great things" are pure gifts from God. The birth of a savior is God's great gift to us all, and we have a role through Mary's participation in this gift-giving event that is to extend in space and time. "Great things" include the greatest, namely, a person: God-man; but our bearing this gift is great enough indeed. What is done is the speaking of a Word, but Mary is first in the chorus; she realizes the great event of Incarnation, which becomes more than a moment; it is a process. More "great things" will follow for her and for us, including the privilege of being compassionate and co-suffering with the Messiah in special ways. Mary's privilege to be one with the Lord follows from her free "yes" to being the Christ-bearer, *Theotokos*.

Just as the reflection of Mary to these events, so our own reflection shows us the gifts as well. The great things done include the invitation to move beyond the Incarnation to the redemptive act itself. As we will soon see in the second part, Mary will experience a sword that pierces her soul -- *so that the secret thoughts of many will be laid bare* (Luke 2:35). A process is initiated in which we are invited to participate along with Mary in the work of the Lord during these troubled times.

*Your mercy reaches from  
age to age for those who fear You.*

Mary sees God's mercy and simultaneously fears God. Mary is not a fearful person, but rather she is a very brave soul who has the deepest respect for the God of mercy -- and in that the virtue of fear of God resides. In such an arena of love, Mary seeks with her whole being to please her loving parent. Fear of not pleasing another is so utterly natural, and Mary is one of us. *Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favor* (Luke 1:30). An awe for the greatness of God elicits the deepest emotions from faithful people. Fear of God, a gift of the Holy Spirit, involves Mary's deep respect for her