

Daughters of Mary, Mother of Our Hope



The Canticle of Simeon

Now dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, in peace, according to Thy word: For mine own eyes hath seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the sight of all the peoples, a light to reveal Thee to the nations and the glory of Thy people Israel.

Advent/Christmas 2009

Volume Two

O Little Town of Bethlehem...

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

(Micah 5:2)

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him."

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ (Messiah) was to be born.

They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet:

'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'

...and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was.

(Matthew 2:1-6, 9)



Source: <http://www.vintage-ornaments.com> - "Bethlehem Manger Advent Calendar"

**Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.**

**Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art:
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.**

**By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.**

A Few Responses to the Birth of the Savior from His Family

From His uncle, Zechariah...

The Benedictus

The Canticle of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79)

Zechariah is the father of John (the Baptist), our Lord's cousin, chosen by God to be the forerunner of the Messiah as foretold by the prophet Micah.

*Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior,
born of the house of his servant David.*

*Through his holy prophets he promised of old
that he would save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us.*

*He promised to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant.*

*This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham;
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.*

*You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.*

*In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the
shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.*



From the aged Simeon...

From His Mother...

The Magnificat

The Canticle of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)

The joy of the Blessed Virgin Mary at her cousin Elizabeth's proclamation that the Child in Mary's womb is none less than her LORD, the God of Israel, the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham.

*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.*

Nunc Dimittis

Canticle of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32)

Simeon knew that he would not die before he saw the Messiah. When at last he beheld the Child in the Temple in the arms of Mary, His mother, Simeon lifted Him to the God of Israel and prayed:

*Lord, now you let your servant go in peace;
Your word has been fulfilled.
My eyes have seen the salvation
You have prepared in the sight of every people,
A light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people, Israel.*

From this Hebrew-Catholic Sister...



Oy...there is simply too much to tell you in the space of one page. Just a few highlights...

✧ I recall as a young Jewish woman, how I loved the lights, the warmth, the beauty that seemed to permeate the very air in New York City at Christmas. I recall my longing for meaning, for purpose, for a reason for our existence and the *hope* that tugged at my heart at the sound of Salvation Army bells, of gift giving, and of a mysterious wonder that seemed to make all of mankind one – even for a time. I recall, too, the one scene I could not handle: that of the Child in the manger that dotted the landscape, Fifth Avenue store windows, and church lawns. How, I asked, could anyone worship that Baby—a man, a human being? *God alone* was to be worshipped.

✧ I don't think I'll ever forget the miraculous moment, years later, when the truth of what, to me, sounded like an irreverent tale, broke through my dark and fearful heart: that 2,000 years before, the Messiah had been born as a tiny Babe. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had entered time and space...had become Man...for us...to bring us back to God.

✧ I remember hearing for the first time, words to what I *thought* were familiar Christmas carols: “*Joy to the world, the Lord has come.*” I stood frozen: “*The LORD has come*”??? The song *always* said that?

✧ And I recall the grace that flooded my soul as I came to realize that the God of Abraham not only became Man at the Incarnation, but that, in a yet

further and unfathomable act of condescension, became our very Food. I remember the night, 14 years ago, when I entered, at last, the Catholic Church, the fulfillment of Judaism, and the unspeakable moment when the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the form of Bread, the Eucharist, the living Manna, was placed on my tongue.

Is it any wonder that the Baby in the Manger has become my life, who has given me all of His? I have no other desire than to give my all to Him and to live the rest of my days helping others to know Him and the life, the peace, the joy, the forgiveness, purpose, meaning, the *blessed happiness* that awaits all who will put their trust in Him.

Sister Ros, why then, if Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, did you change the name of your new community from *Daughters of Mary, Mother of Israel's Hope* to *Daughters of Mary, Mother of Our Hope*?

The primary reason is that many have mistakenly supposed that we are an outreach to the Jewish people. On the contrary, it is the *Jewish* nation who was given the vocation to reach out to the Gentile nations, to be a “light to the Gentiles” (Isaiah 49:6). Mary is the Mother of *Our Hope* because the Messiah (who is our only Hope) came *through* Israel, and *for* Israel, in order that, in Him, salvation may come to the *entire world* (John 4:22). He is *our Hope*, the hope of Jew and Gentile alike, a light of revelation to the nations and the glory of His people Israel.

Can you give us a quick word on how your novitiate is going and what can we do to help?

It is going more wonderfully than I could have imagined. The Sisters of the Visitation are a very beautiful community of cloistered nuns who, beginning this January, will be celebrating the 4th centenary of the founding of their order by St. Francis de Sales and

St. Jane de Chantal in 1610, in Annecy, France. I cannot imagine our dear Lord having placed me with a more faithful, loving, committed group of sisters than fill this monastery. I suspect that our parting next June will be a difficult one. They've already determined that “my” sisters will be their nieces.

The greatest avenue of help is, and always will be, through your prayers. I am most grateful for them. We are very grateful too for the donations and gifts many have sent to help with the work and formation of the new community, and thank all of you in advance who are able to assist us at this time as well. A very special “thank you” also to the many volunteers who have helped Dawn at the convent in St. Louis during my absence. My deepest gratitude to you all who have prayed and given so freely of your time and resources to help in the foundation of this work for His Kingdom.

Do you have any thoughts of how we might reach out to our families and others this Advent and Christmas?

Three things come to mind:

1. Read the story of “A Baby's Hug” on the next page. Then . . .
2. Go to a spouse, a child, a friend, or an enemy who has offended or hurt you, and *forgive them*, as God in Christ has forgiven you.
3. Find a lost soul who has not known the love of God. Tell him or her of the God who became a tiny Infant, an Infant born to die—for them—for our sins, the sin that separated us from God. Tell them that death could not keep Him, that He rose from the dead to give life—all of life—to all who will come to Him in faith.

My love and best wishes to you and to your loved ones for a most blessed and holy Advent and Christmas,

Sister Rosalind

And from a Baby and a Hobo for whom the Messiah gave His life . . .

A Baby's Hug

We were the only family with children in the restaurant. I sat Erik in a high chair and noticed everyone was eating and talking quietly.

Suddenly Erik squealed with glee and said, "Hi there." He pounded his fat baby hands on the highchair tray. His eyes were crinkled in laughter and his mouth was bared in a toothless grin as he wriggled and giggled with merriment.

I looked around and saw the source of his happiness. It was a man whose pants were baggy and whose toes poked out of his shoes. His shirt was dirty and his hair was uncombed and unwashed. His whiskers were too short to be called a beard and his nose was so varicose it looked like a road map. We were too far from him to smell him, but I was sure he smelled bad.

His hands waved and flapped on loose wrists. "Hiya, buster," the man said to Erik. My husband and I exchanged looks. "What do we do?" Erik continued to laugh and answer, "Hi, hi there."

Everyone in the restaurant noticed and looked at us and then at the man. The old geezer was creating a scene with my beautiful baby. Our meal came and the man began shouting from across the room, "Do you know patty cake? Do you know peek-a-boo? Hey, look, he knows peek-a-boo."

Nobody thought the old man was cute. He was obviously drunk. My husband and I were embarrassed. We ate in silence, except for Erik, who was running through his repertoire for the admiring skid row bum, who in turn, reciprocated with his cute comments.

We finally got through the meal and headed for the door. My husband went to pay the check and told me to meet him in the parking lot.

The old man was poised between me and the door.

"Lord, just let me out of here before he speaks to me or Erik," I prayed.

As I drew closer to the man, I turned my back trying to sidestep him and avoid any air he might be breathing. As I did, Erik leaned over my arm, reaching with both arms in a baby's "pick me up" position.

Before I could stop him, Erik had propelled himself from my arms into the

The ragged old man had unwittingly reminded me, "To enter the Kingdom of God, we must become as little children."

man's. Suddenly a very smelly old man and a very young baby consummated their love relationship. In an act of total trust, love, and submission, Erik laid his tiny head upon the man's ragged shoulder.

The man's eyes closed, and I saw tears hover beneath his lashes. His aged hands, full of grime, pain, and hard labor, cradled my baby's bottom and stroked his back. No two beings have ever loved so deeply for so short a time. I was awestruck.

The old man rocked and cradled Erik in his arms and his eyes opened and fixed squarely on mine. He said in a firm commanding voice, "You take care of this baby."

Somehow I managed to say, "I will," from a throat that contained a stone. He pried Erik from his chest unwill-

ingly, longingly, as though he were in pain.

I took my baby, and the man said, "God bless you, ma'am. You've given me my Christmas gift."

I said nothing more than a murmured thanks. With Erik in my arms, I ran for the car.

My husband was wondering why I was crying and holding Erik so tightly and why I was saying, "My God, my God, forgive me."

I had just witnessed Christ's love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, who made no judgment; a child who saw a soul, and a mother who saw a suit of clothes.

I was a Christian who was blind, holding a child who was not.

I felt it was God asking, "Are you willing to share your son for a moment?" when He shared His for all eternity.

The ragged old man had unwittingly reminded me, "To enter the Kingdom of God, we must become as little children."



The Child in Joseph's adoring arms.