

From Henry's Desk

Uplifting the Lowly at Christmas

Luke 1: 46-55

"Mary said, "My heart praises the Lord; my soul is glad because of God my Savior, for he has remembered me, his lowly servant! From now on all people will call me happy, because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me. His name is holy; from one generation to another he shows mercy to those who honor him. He has stretched out his mighty arm and scattered the proud with all their plans. He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has kept the promise he made to our ancestors, and has come to the help of his servant Israel. He has remembered to show mercy to Abraham and to all his descendants forever!"

The verses above from Luke's gospel are often called "The Magnificat." These verses are quite uplifting to anyone who has felt the pain of illness, the pathos of depression, the sting of injustice and the oppression of being poor. Mary, who was probably a teen girl with no standing and little self esteem, was chosen by God to bear the son of God. She praises God in this song of praise. The Good News translation emphasizes that God has remembered a "lowly servant." Mercy is shown by God through the generations.

Until the Salk vaccine in 1955, any child crippled by polio knew the pain of that illness, the pathos of depression and did not understand the injustice or the victimization of the innocent. This same unfairness of a handicapped child still happens today. Thus, these words during Advent can still speak to and lift the lowly.