

## Tuesday Reflection 7th December 2021

For the past week, I have been on retreat at St Beuno's in North Wales. Much of the focus of my reflection has been on the two great canticles at the centre of Morning and Evening Prayer, the *Benedictus* (Luke 1:68-79) and the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55).

The *Benedictus* is the great outpouring of joy by Zechariah when his speech has been restored: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel. He has visited his people and redeemed them." The one phrase which always stays with me is "The loving kindness of our God", the source of all our blessings. Then there is the hopeful expectation that "He will give light to those in darkness ... and guide us into the way of peace" - how appropriate for the dark times in which we live.

The "light to those in darkness" provides a link to the Virgin Mary's *Magnificat*, her great outpouring of joy and hope at the Annunciation: "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour". She celebrates a world turned upside down, where "the mighty have been put down from their seats" and the "humble and meek have been exalted". Who says there is nothing revolutionary in the Gospel?

In the *Magnificat* Mary mirrors the words spoken by Hannah some 900 years earlier (1 Samuel 1:1-10) "My heart rejoices in the Lord". Hannah too celebrates a true 'levelling-up' agenda: "the Lord raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honour" - and this is because that is the way God has ordained the world in its fulfilment.

The question for us, I suppose, is "What am I doing to help bring this about?" - especially so that, we can sing with Mary: "He has filled the hungry with good things".

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