

# Praying with the Women of the New Testament

## Handout 1

**Opening Prayer:** “Our souls proclaim the greatness of the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Savior. Lord Jesus, teach us to pray. Mother Mary, pray for us.”

*(Note: To hear sessions of our OT study, go to [corardens.com](http://corardens.com). At top of page, click on “Praying with the Women of Scripture” to open the menu.)*

**QUOTE #1** “Throughout the Old Covenant, the mission of many women prepared for that of Mary ... **Against all human expectation, God chooses those who were considered powerless and weak to show forth his faithfulness to his promises.**” (emphasis added, CCC 489)

### QUOTE #2

**The Visitation**  
by **Malcolm Guite**

Here is a meeting made of hidden joys  
Of lightnings cloistered in a narrow place,  
From quiet hearts the sudden flame of praise,  
And in the womb the quickening kick of grace.

Two women on the very edge of things  
Unnoticed and unknown to men of power,  
But in their flesh the hidden Spirit sings  
And in their lives the buds of blessing flower.

And Mary stands with all we call ‘too young,’  
Elizabeth with all called ‘past their prime.’  
They sing today for all the great unsung  
Women who turned eternity to time,

Favoured of heaven, outcast on the earth,  
Prophets who bring the best in us to birth.

**QUOTE #3** “A surge of the heart, a simple look toward heaven, a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.” (CCC 2558)

#### **QUOTE #4 Some lessons from women's prayers in OT**

1. In a time of confusion about the way forward or in the face of obvious temptation, pray *first*
2. Always, *always* begin prayers with God, not ourselves, praising His goodness, mercy, care for His people, faithfulness to His covenant
3. God's goodness and help come to us not because we are good but because he keeps his promises of mercy, love
4. Praying a long time for something has the power to transform us
5. Daily prayer, as a way of life, can prepare us to step into unexpected heroic moments, then step back into small, ordinary lives

We don't seek those moments; they seek us

6. Sometimes God asks us to do something that terrifies us, and no amount of praying makes the fear disappear—faith and fear can co-exist

#### **QUOTE #5 Feminine distinctives of women's prayers in OT**

1. Many OT women sang prayer songs about God's greatness, glory, victory over an enemy, etc.
2. Prayers of OT women frequently occur in connection with a battle against an enemy, robbing enemy of pride and arrogance
3. Praise of God's greatness followed by expressions of smallness (handmaid, widow, lowly servant); consistent posture of *humility, receptivity*
4. Deep awareness of, empathy with human feelings of others in prayer (what they might think, need, suffer, etc.), followed by unwavering confidence in God's love, mercy, willingness to help
5. Desire to share with others the emotion of joy over God's action in personal life or in life of God's people
6. Always connected in prayer to the larger community of God's people, the flock he shepherds; rarely only "I"; almost always "we."

**QUOTE #6 (CCC 2567):** “In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response.”

**QUOTE #7** “... prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for ‘we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying.’” (*Dei Verbum*, Article 25)

**QUOTE #8 Luke 1:28-38**

<sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!” <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

<sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no husband?” <sup>35</sup> And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For with God nothing will be impossible.” <sup>38</sup> And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

**QUOTE #9 *The Reed of God*, Caryll Houselander**

“To what was Mary asked to consent? ... She was simply to remain in the world, to go forward with her marriage to Joseph, to live as an artisan’s wife, just what she had planned to do when she had no idea that anything out of the ordinary would ever happen to her. Yes, it certainly seemed that God wanted to give the world the impression that it is ordinary for Him to be born of a human creature.

Well, that is a fact. God did mean it to be the ordinary thing, for it is His will that Christ shall be born in every human being’s life and not, as a rule, through extraordinary things, but through the ordinary daily life and the human love that people give to one another.

Our Lady said yes. She said yes for us all ...”

**QUOTE# 10 CCC 1691:** "Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature ... Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God." (St. Leo the Great)

**QUOTE #11** "The *Magnificat*—a portrait, so to speak, of [Mary's] soul—is entirely woven from threads of Holy Scripture, threads drawn from the Word of God ... She speaks and thinks with the Word of God; the Word of God becomes her word, and her word issues from the Word of God." (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 41)

### **The *Magnificat***

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 forever.

**Closing Prayer: "Father, Your word is a lamp to our feet and a light on our path. May it be to us according to Your word."**