

Today's poem comes from the BIBLE, and specifically the book of the Bible known as THE GOSPEL OF LUKE. There are four gospels (meaning 'Good News') telling the story of the life of JESUS. They are the GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, the GOSPEL OF MARK, the GOSPEL OF LUKE, and the GOSPEL OF JOHN. MATTHEW and JOHN knew Jesus very well - they were two of Jesus's TWELVE APOSTLES, who were His closest followers. As a result they are mentioned quite a bit in all four gospels. MARK isn't mentioned in the gospels, but I believe that as a child he was also a follower of Jesus and got to know Him and His apostles. LUKE never knew Jesus - he only learned about Jesus and became a Christian after Jesus' time here on earth. So Luke was very much like a journalist - he met loads of people who knew Jesus and asked them about Him, and put together their stories into his gospel. And one of the people he met and talked to was MARY, the mother of Jesus. And so Luke's gospel includes the story of how Jesus came to be born - and he would have learned that story from Mary.

After Mary agreed to God's plan that she should become the MOTHER OF GOD, by giving birth to Jesus, she visited her cousin ELIZABETH. Elizabeth immediately knew in her heart that Mary was going to give birth to the man who would save the world from all its troubles and said so to Mary. Mary's response is the poem below, which is known as the *MAGNIFICAT* because in Latin the first word of the poem is '*Magnificat*'. The first line is '*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*' - which means 'My (*mea*) soul (*anima*) doth magnify (*magnificat*) the Lord (*Dominum*)'. Here is the poem in full:



My soul doth magnify the Lord  
 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my saviour  
 For He has looked on the lowliness of His handmaiden  
 And behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed  
 For He that is mighty has done great things for me  
 And holy is His name.  
 His mercy is upon those that fear him, throughout all generations.  
 He uses the power of His arm to scatter the proud and arrogant.  
 He has pulled princes from their thrones,  
 And He has lifted up the humble and the meek.  
 He has filled the hungry with good things,  
 And the rich He has sent away empty.  
 And in His mercy, he has helped his servant Israel  
 Faithful to the promise he made to Abraham, and his descendants forever.

And Mary was right - all generations would call her blessed, because for hundreds of years now, all over the world, people have said the 'HAIL MARY'. And how does that prayer begin?

Hail Mary  
 Full of grace  
 The Lord is with you

BLESSED art thou amongst women

and so as not to cut it off, here is the rest of the Hail Mary

and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners

now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

A good prayer to say, and I say it 50 times a day when I say THE ROSARY. But the *Magnificat* is a magnificent poem of praise to God, and if there is one poem I wished I could know off by heart, it would be the magnificent *Magnificat*.