

St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church
Moore Street, Adelaide

Reflection for the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Following the Way of Jesus

Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary, is honoured and revered as the Mother of our Lord, and we now have her very prominently in our liturgical Calendar in the Anglican Church. It is helpful to identify why we think so highly of her, almost apart from the fact that she is such an important mother.

In the Gospels we can read only snippets of information about Mary. The Gospels are principally about Jesus and references to others in his earthly story are for interest. So the Gospels have no interest in Mary for her own sake but only in relation to Jesus.

The Visit to Cousin Elisabeth. Mary does this to confirm the message she received from the Archangel, Gabriel is true. The fact that Elisabeth is expecting a child confirms for Mary that the Archangel was not a dream but Elisabeth is a sign to her that her own pregnancy is real and a birth will happen. Nevertheless we can also see in this visit an indication of Mary's thoughtfulness and generosity in going to look after Elisabeth.

Barren Women Pregnant. There is no suggestion that Mary is naturally incapable of giving birth to children. Elisabeth had never given birth previously and hers was an unexpected pregnancy. She belongs to a line of childless women who eventually gave birth to great biblical people who carried out God's plans in history. The birth of Jesus is of a different order which is unique.

Jesus Praises Mary for Who and What She Is. A woman in a crowd suddenly cries out to Jesus, "Happy the womb which bore you!" and so on and Jesus responds "Still happier are they who hear the word of God and keep it!" Some take this as a put down of Mary but just as easily it affirms Mary as a model disciple for reasons which matter. We might say to someone how wonderful they are because of something they have done and someone else might reply that people who do a number of things, all of which the person has done, are wonderful.

Mary is regarded as first among the disciples – not because she is the mother of Jesus but because she was attentive to the Jesus' words and put them into action. If we are looking for an ideal follower of Christ to imitate, Mary is our example and in her entrance into the heavenly presence of God we can see the future glory which God has in store for those who try their best to follow the way of Jesus.

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