

---

22 Tuesday

TUESDAY 4th Week of Advent

1Sam 1:24-28

1 Sam 2: 4 - 8

Luke 1: 46 – 56

Perhaps the most beautiful prayer in the whole Bible is Mary's song of praise to God recorded in chapter 1 of St Luke's gospel. It's the gospel reading of the day a number of times during the year, and on feasts of Our Lady. It's specially appropriate now, just before Christmas, to hear it again and pray it with Mary.

Her words are spoken in the presence of her cousin Elizabeth. Mary had gone to visit and help Elizabeth, bringing the presence of Christ now conceived within her own womb. Elizabeth's unborn also responded in joy. Both women acknowledge the majesty and greatness of the Lord, and His graciousness towards them, associating them with His saving power and His promises to Israel.

But today's first reading reminds us of another woman, Hannah, who was so deeply grateful to the Lord for the gift of a son. Hannah came to the temple to offer up Samuel to God's service. She is a symbol of Mary's offering. For Mary accepted to be God's instrument, whatever that might involve, and she too would present her Son in the temple to serve the Lord.

In Mary's hymn of praise, it is that son Jesus who fulfills the promises God made, who exercises God's power towards the proud and the mighty and the powerful of the earth. If all generations are to call her 'blessed', it's because of God's gentle kindness towards her, because of what her Son was to do for the world's lowliest. Her hymn becomes the prayer of praise of every Christian who recognizes what Jesus has done for each of us, He, Our Lord and savior.