Magnificent, Marxist Mary: Shedding Textual Light on Advent’s Brightest Star

Rev. Dr. Julie Faith Parker
November 9, 2021
Magnificat: Evening Canticles in B flat

Composer: C.V. Stanford

Cambridge Singers
Kim André Arnesen's
MAGNIFICAT
2015
Infancy Gospel of James

- written between late first and mid-second century CE
- contains stories about Mary’s own upbringing
- mother is Anna
- father Joachim
- Mary is dedicated in the temple
- Mary has midwives

Mary is only named once in Mark’s Gospel (6:3) and she is never mentioned by name in the Gospel of John.
Jesus named after Joshua

Joseph named after Joseph

(not a trick question): Joseph

Mary named after Miriam
Matt. 13:55 Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? [Greek reads: Mariam] And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?
Exodus 2

1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman.

2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months.

3 When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river.

4 His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it.

6 When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him, "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said.

7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?"

8 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother.

9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it.

10 When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."
Matt. 1:18 ¶ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Matt. 1:19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

Matt. 1:20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Matt. 1:21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Matt. 1:22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

Matt. 1:23 “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”
Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."
Matt. 2:11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Matt. 2:12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Matt. 2:13 ¶ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”

Matt. 2:14 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt,

Matt. 2:15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

Matt. 2:16 ¶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men.

Matt. 2:17 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

Matt. 2:18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, 

wailing and loud lamentation,

Rachel weeping for her children;

she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

Matt. 2:19 ¶ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said,

Matt. 2:20 “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.”

Matt. 2:21 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.
1 Samuel 2
1 Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is exalted in my God. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in my victory.
2 "There is no Holy One like the LORD, no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.
3 Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.
4 The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength.
5 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry are fat with spoil. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.
6 The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
7 The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts.
8 He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world.
9 "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by might does one prevail.
10 The LORD! His adversaries shall be shattered; the Most High will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king, and exalt the power of his anointed."
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Luke 1
46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
50 His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.
51 He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;
53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.
54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."
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Luke 1:52  He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;  
Luke 1:53  he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

Alternate
Luke 1:52  He has overthrown powerful rulers from thrones, and exalted the poor;  
Luke 1:53  Those perpetually hungry, he satisfied with good things, the wealthy, he sent away empty.

Luke 6:20  Then he looked up at his disciples and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.  
Luke 6:21  “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.
A Psalm for Courage like Mary

1: Grace and peace be with you, in the name of the courageous girl, Mary.

2: Shalom to you, in the name of the strong mother, Mary.

1: How good it is to remember Mary and to honor her.

2: How good it is to be inspired by Mary and to emulate her.

1: Like Mary, may we be open to challenges that make us uncomfortable.

2: Like Mary, may we take risks on behalf of others.

1: She teaches us that wonders come from unlikely peoples and places.

2: She shows us how God works through all the world’s races.

1: Mary, guide our vision along this Advent way,

All: Fill our hearts, ignite our lives, make us brave – we pray.