

# Daughters of Mary, Mother of Our Hope



## The Canticum of Simeon

Now dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, in peace, according to Thy word: For mine own eyes hath seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the sight of all the peoples, a light to reveal Thee to the nations and the glory of Thy people Israel.

Advent/Christmas 2010

Newsletter Five

*And the Lord said to Abram:*



Artist: József Molnár, 1850

Journey of Abram and Sarai from Ur of the Chaldees

*... and IN THEE shall all the kindred  
of the earth be blessed.*

*(Genesis 12:1-3)*

*Go forth out of thy country,  
and from thy kindred,  
and out of thy father's house,  
and come into the land which I shall shew thee.  
And I will make of thee a great nation,  
and I will bless thee,  
and magnify thy name,  
and thou shalt be blessed.  
I will bless them that bless thee,  
and curse them that curse thee. . .*



Artist: Lorenzo Lotto, 1523

The Birth of the Seed of Abraham

## The seed of Abram did not begin with Abram . . .

That seed had its beginning in the Garden some 2,000 years prior when, in consequence of Adam and Eve's disobedience, God promised to send a redeemer, a deliverer, one who would come from the union of Adam and Eve to reverse the curse that separated them, and all of mankind to follow, from God and from blissful union with Him with whom they walked and talked in the Garden of Eden.

And God said to the serpent in the Garden:

*"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed;  
he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).*

God promised that *the seed of the woman* would one day bruise (in the Hebrew: crush, deal a fatal blow to) the seed of the serpent, who is called by his Hebrew title: Satan.

I've often wondered if Adam and Eve must not have thought that Cain, their firstborn, was that promised deliverer. But then, Cain killed his brother Abel and they probably rethought the matter! Their third son . . .

✧ **Seth**, however, might have been seen as a candidate. It was with Seth that “men began to call upon the name of the LORD” (Gen. 4:26). Seth was not the seed, however. But the *line* of the seed, the *Messianic* line, the line through which the Messiah, the anointed one, the deliverer, would come from Adam and Eve *through* Seth to a man named . . .

✧ **Noah**. Noah was not the seed either, but the Messianic line would continue through Noah's son . . .

✧ **Shem**, and through Shem to a man named . . .

✧ **Abram**. God saw Abram's heart and called him from among a pagan people to go to a land He would show him. God changed Abram (meaning “high and honored father”) to *Abraham* (“father of many nations”) since God intended to raise through Abraham a great nation, a people set apart for Himself through whom *the Seed*, the Messiah, the deliverer promised to Adam and Eve would come (Gen. 17:1-8).

✧ **Abraham** had two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. It was through . . .

✧ **Isaac** that the line of the Promised Seed would continue (Gen. 17:19). Isaac also had two sons: Jacob and Esau. The Messianic line would continue through . . .

✧ **Jacob** (Gen. 25:19-26). Jacob had twelve sons; the line would continue through Jacob's son . . .

✧ **Judah** (Gen. 49:10) – and from the tribe of Judah through the family of . . .

✧ **David** (1 Samuel 16:1, 13). David, a shepherd, the sweet psalmist of Israel, and a man after God's own heart, would become Israel's greatest king. One day, the prophet Nathan came to King David with a message from God:

*‘When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; but I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom*

*shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.’ (2 Samuel 12:7-16)*

David is the “end of the Messianic line” that points to the Messiah, in that the Deliverer, The Promised Seed of the Woman, would be the offspring, the descendant of David.

For approximately 2,000 years, the Jewish nation awaited the Messiah who would be born from Abraham through his son, Isaac, through *his* son, Jacob, through *his* son, Judah, and through the tribe of Judah to the family of David. And from David would be born a woman—a virgin (Is. 7:14)—through whom the long-awaited Messiah of Israel would come.

Less than 1,000 years after God's words to King David through the prophet Nathan, the angel Gabriel (who had appeared to Daniel 600 years earlier and announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah only six months prior), came to a virgin, born of the house of David, from the tribe of Judah, from the family of Abraham, and said to her:

*“Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 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, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:26-33)*

That same busy angel appeared also to Joseph, who also was from the tribe of Judah and the family of David, and said to him:

*“Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel” (which means, God with us). (Matthew 1:20-23).*

Bishop Fulton Sheen wrote:

*In the filthiest place in the world, a stable, Purity was born. He, who was later to be slaughtered by men acting as beasts, was born among beasts. He, who would call Himself the “living Bread descended from Heaven,” was laid in a manger, literally, a place to eat. Centuries before, Jews had worshiped the golden calf, and the Greeks, the ass. Men bowed down before them as before God. The ox and the ass now were present to make their innocent reparation, bowing down before their God.<sup>1</sup>*

He is the Promised Seed, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the One who would save His people from their sins, who would reverse the curse of our first parents. He is the seed of the woman, the *new Adam*, who would crush the serpent's head, destroy the power of evil and provide the way for us, children of Adam and Eve to be restored to a relationship with God (cf. 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45). He is the seed of Abraham through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

*And He is God*—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who took on flesh and, in an incomparable act of love, became Man—for us—to bring us home to the Father (Is. 7:14, 9:6; Mt. 1:23; Jn 1:1-14). He became Man through the “Yes” of a young Jewish handmaid named Mary (Miriam in Hebrew), the one chosen from the creation of the world to bear the Messiah. We will never know, this side of Heaven, all that Mary’s “Yes” to God meant.

In the beautiful words of Caryl Houselander:

*In giving life to Him, (Mary) was giving Him death.*

*All other children born must inevitably die; death belongs to fallen nature; the mother's gift to the child is life.*

*But Christ is life; death did not belong to Him.*

*In fact, unless Mary would give Him death, He could not die.*

*Unless she would give Him the capacity for suffering, He could not suffer.*

*He could only feel cold and hunger and thirst if she gave Him her vulnerability to cold and hunger and thirst.*

*He could not know the indifference of friends or treachery or the bitterness of being betrayed unless she gave Him a human mind and a human heart.*

*That is what it meant to Mary to give human nature to God.*



*It is truly proper to glorify you, who have borne God, the Ever-blessed, Immaculate, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, you, truly the Mother of God, we magnify. Amen<sup>3</sup>*

*He was invulnerable; He asked her for a body to be wounded.*

*He was God; He asked her to make Him man.*

*He asked for hands and feet to be nailed.*

*He asked for flesh to be scourged.*

*He asked for blood to be shed.*

*He asked for a heart to be broken.*

*The stable at Bethlehem was the first Calvary.*

*The wooden manger was the first Cross.*

*The swaddling bands were the first burial bands.*

*The Passion had begun.*

*Christ was man.*

*This too was the first separation.*

*She knew that this little son of hers was God's Son and that God had not given Him to her for herself alone but for the whole world.<sup>2</sup>*

And in giving her humanity to God, Mary gave *all* humanity to Him, that all would know Him to whom all creation points. History is His-story. “I am come,” said the Seed, the Messiah, the Christ, “that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

May we who have received the inestimable gift of grace to believe, await His coming and worship Him anew this blessed Christmas when the Son of God became the son of man. May every doubting heart draw near to the stable and not be afraid—not be afraid to believe, to give your whole heart and life to the One who loves you and who gave His all for you.

<sup>1</sup>Life of Christ, by Bishop Fulton Sheen, pp. 27-28

<sup>2</sup>The Reed of God, pp. 41-42

<sup>3</sup>From the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

**Uh . . . Excuse me, Sister Ros, but what about you? Do you have an update since you returned from the novitiate year?**

Of course. I suppose you could say I am following in my great, great, grrreat grandfather Abraham's shoes . . .

**Where are you going, Abram?**

I don't know. I'm leaving Ur.

**But to where?**

To a land God will show me.

**What's your forwarding address?**

I don't have one yet.

**So why are you going?**

Because God said.

**Where are you going, Sister Ros?**

I don't know. I'm leaving St. Louis.

**But to where?**

To a land God will show me.

**What's your forwarding address?**

I don't have one yet.

**So why are you going?**

Because God said.

That is basically the update as of December 1, the writing of this newsletter. I arrived in St. Louis a little over two years ago at the invitation of (then) Archbishop (now Cardinal) Raymond Burke. Upon return from my novitiate year I met with his successor, Archbishop Robert Carlson, who informed me that he does not wish the new community to be established in St. Louis, and has invited me to contact other bishops who may wish our charism.

**But why? What about all the work that's been done? The year of waiting for you to complete the novitiate? The women who are hoping to enter? Oy!**

Because God said. God knows what He is doing and I want only to follow His will, which has become my food. I am in the process of contacting other bishops, packing up the convent and waiting on the Lord. I hope to be able to give you a forwarding address with the Easter newsletter, if not before.

I will be most grateful for your prayers for our Lord's will. I would also be very grateful for your financial support at this time. We have poured many resources into the present convent in St. Louis—which, hopefully will be put to good use by others—but we have little remaining to begin anew. Our blessed Lord, the God of Abraham who sent His Son, who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, has never failed to provide. If He provides through those of you who can assist us at this time, we will be deeply grateful. For those who cannot stretch your giving further, especially at this very difficult time of joblessness, homelessness, and other mounting

needs, we will be exceedingly grateful for your prayers.

I want to leave you with one of the most beautiful images I have come across. In this painful day when so much of the world counts the child in its mother's womb as disposable, here, in Elizabeth's womb, is John the Baptist bowing to the Son of God in Mary's womb. Blessed be God that these two holy women "chose" life, and Mary, to bear the Life of the world, born that holy morn for our salvation. O for a thousand tongues to sing our great Redeemer's praise!

**The Visitation of Mary to her Jewish Cousin Elizabeth**

"In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, *'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord . . .'*

**The Song of the Mother of the Messiah**

And Mary said, *'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good 14th century wall-painting in the Timios Stavros Church things and the rich he has sent empty away. He has in Pelendri. The unborn John the Baptist bows before helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, the unborn Jesus. as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever'' (Luke 1:39-55).*

*For ever.* May the Mother of the Seed of Abraham draw you and those you love nearer to her Divine Son this blessed Advent season. My love to you all and prayers for a most glorious, holy, and blessed Christmas!

Sister Rosalind Moss

*Sister Rosalind*



*The Visit of the Mother of God to the Mother of His Herald (and the first Eucharistic Procession!)*

Source: Icon of the Visitation from a church in Cyprus, 14th century