the COMMUNICATOR

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The Magnificat

MARY'S SONG OF PRAISE

Expanding with grateful love,
My whole life
Will forever reflect
The greatness of my Liberator.

My whole person
Lies open to God —
My Saviour and my Liberator.

With unexpected tenderness
He has favored this response of His willing maiden.
Generations now and to come
Will celebrate this unique gift
Of his liberating love.

The Almighty has singled me out
To witness to his liberating actions.

He is the Holy One,
Who bestows his love upon all
Who are open to his liberating power —

To everyone,
To each one personally.

In times of old,
He used the strength and power of his arm
To shame the proud,

Withdrawing his liberating hand
Because of their arrogance.

Those who long
For the outpouring of his liberating love
Will find fulfilment.

But the self-satisfied
Will remain in complete frustration.

In this way
He topples the oppressors from their comfortable chairs.

He raises the oppressed and the wretched of the earth
To live lives filled with human dignity,
To determine their own destiny,
To participate in decisions which affect their lives,
To walk the earth in freedom and in love,
As men and women,
In his image.

He will fill the Asian children
With rice
And with good things.

The exploiters he will send away,
Without a peso.

At this moment, here and now,
His faithful servant Israel —
The Church in the modern world —
Has received a commission,
Has accepted the commission
With a full heart,
To serve the people of God.
As a source of blessing and liberation,
For all men.

Now is fulfilled that promise
Which was given to the faithful old man, Abraham,
And to his children, forever.

Amen.

The Benedictus

THE PRAYER OF ZACHARY

Blessed be the Lord,
The Liberator,
The God of Israel!

He came to the help of his people.
He liberated them!

He has raised up a mighty Liberator,
A great Saviour,
Directly descended from his servant, David.

This is what he has done for us.

A long time ago,
Through the words of those dedicated men,
Whom we call prophets,
He promised to do this.

Through them, he promised us salvation —
Liberation from all our enemies,
Liberation from the hands
Of all our oppressors.

He promised our forefathers
That he would forgive them
All their fears,
All their cowardice,
All their selfishness;
That he would show them mercy,
Because the memory of the Holy Agreement
Is always on his mind.

He made a promise, you see,
To that faithful old man, Abraham
A solemn promise.

He swore to grant us liberation.

Liberation —

From the hands of all our oppressors —
the international, multinational ones,
the national ones,
the subtle quiet ones,

In our families, groups and communities —
the newer ones,
the older ones.

He promised liberation from the worst of all oppressors,
Who lurks deep within our own hearts,
Always telling us to blame other people,
to blame other events,
to blame other situations,
For the hardships, slaveries and sufferings
Of our lives;

Blinding us to the fact
That Our Father may be as much at work
among our enemies,
As he is among our friends;

Blinding us to the fact
That our enemies and Pharaohs
are as worthy of life
as we are;

Blinding us
To that Easter perspective,
which always sees the enemy of today
as the reconciled and liberated
friend of tomorrow;

Blinding us —
With the devilish scream of bitter cynical pessimism —
To the sheer gift dimension
of God's foolish choice of us
as bearers of his promise;

But, above all, blinding us
To the awful reality
of the accepted, institutionalized injustice
of the third world poor:
The brutalized, enslaved young men;
The spent-out, old, young women;
The pock-marked, hungry children;

So that too much earnest theorizing
About what to do,
And how to do it,
Cheats us into another compromising postponement
Of solidarity at their side.

He promised liberation from all these oppressors,
And from their works.

Liberation from hunger,
from thirst,
from persecution,
from domination,
from manipulation,
from exploitation.

Liberation from fatalism,
in the face of poverty.

Liberation from the living neon-light lies
of the consumer-production society,
as it spreads its greedy technological tentacles
into the third world raw materials.

Liberation from poverty,
Because of which lovely Oriental girls
sell their bodies
With the virgin utterance:

"Be it done to me
According to your dollar!"

A dollar that puts rice on the distant barrio table,
Or mis-educates a whole family.

Mis-educates —
For the graduate of many of our schools
Often drifts away from commitment to the poor.

While he has been careful to avoid
Their bad language,
And their bad table manners,
He ends with his heart closed to the poor.

Liberation from self,
To be free for the great Holy Other, Himself.

Liberation to pause,
To stop struggling to serve others,
To allow the giving of great thanks.

Liberation to wonder,
to praise,
to celebrate,
to worship,
without fear of losing time
in the sheer uselessness
and pointlessness
of simple adoration.

That is the solemn promise
Which has opened up for us
The possibility of responding to his love,
By living lives dedicated
To the struggle for truth and justice.

As he glances at us sideways from the sky,
And from every eye
That is hungry,
Or thirsty,
Or stranger,
Lonely, unloved, marginal,
Victimized or oppressed in any way.

This solemn promise was not given us to respond to
Just for a day,
Or for a week —
But all the days of our lives!

And you — young man —
You will be called the prophet
Of the most high God.

You are the one who will go before
The Liberator.

You must prepare the people
For his ways,
For his radical, sensational life-style.

The set-up, as we know it now,
Is going to be rattled.
That's for sure.
It will never be the same again.

You will have to conscientice the people,
And make them aware
Of what salvation and liberation
Are all about!

Especially that liberation which comes
From the forgiveness of fear and cowardice,
From the forgiveness of selfishness,
In all its forms.

A liberation concretized in the dramatic movement

From *"Poor me!"*

To *"How about you?"*

All the way
To the renewed offer of friendship
With the God of the promise,
Coupled with the invitation
To forgive others.

And you — young man —
Will be a model for Christian leaders,
And for all who work with "The Least",
with the oppressed,
with the powerless.

He — living on in the least —
Must grow greater.
I must grow smaller.

For never ever must paternalism,
Or a never-ending spiral of palliatives,
Rob or short-cut the oppressed peoples
Of their own participation
In their own liberation.

Within the culture of silence,
Where the oppressed are over-determined
towards fatalism,
They themselves must grow
From naive awareness
To critical awareness;
From naive action,
Without analysis, strategy or tactics,
To critical action,
Leading to further critical reflection.

Our God,
Who promised us a Liberator,
Is a tender and compassionate God,
Full of loving kindness
For all the peoples and tribes
Of our world.

He will cause this liberation to come upon us
Through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The initiative for forgiveness and friendship
Will be incarnate in us,
As it was in Jesus.

This liberation of the Holy Spirit will come upon us
Like a beautiful, fresh dawn,
After a night of darkness,
As it came upon Jesus,
In the morning of his manhood.

It will come upon us like the morning sun,
Shining life and hope
Into the dry bones of those
Who live in darkness
And in the shadow of death.

Heads that have been bowed,
Through centuries of oppression
And of institutionalized sin,
Will lift again!

Hearts will open to life,
to laughter,
to love,
to friendship,
to justice,
to peace —

Just as the early morning flowers
Lift up their heads to the dawn,
Opening petal by petal,
to a new dawn,
to a new day,
to new light,
to new life,
After the cold, dark night.

And the people of God will walk again
With great dignity,
Carrying gifts to the altar
Of their God and Liberator,
Who guides their feet
On the road to justice and peace.

Glory to our great God of the promise!
He has always been so much on the side of man
That he had to become man!
He had to become one of us!

Glory to his crucified and risen Son,
Our Lord and, Liberator,
Jesus Christ!

He became one of us!
He sided with the under-dog!
He lives among us still!

Glory to the Holy Spirit
Through whom he lives among us,
Like the dawn after darkness,
Liberating us always more and more,
For the service of others,
and
For the giving of great thanks
and praise.

Amen.

This is a creative paraphrase of Zachary's Prayer. The translation is based on the original Hebrew, illumined by the vision of Paolo Friere. It was composed by a young Irish missionary in Zambales, Father Declan Coyle, S.S.C.