

## FINDING THE TRUE SAVIOUR

### *My Spirit rejoices in God My Saviour....Luke 1:*

The children of “Our Saviour” proclaimed the Gospel so that you might join Mary in calling Him “My Saviour”. Do you have a Saviour? Do you need a Saviour? Do you know what it is to possess a Saviour?

In times past as in times present people have sought and found only limited Saviours. In the days of Caesar Augustus, which we’ll hear of in full in a few days, Caesar claimed the title Saviour. Of course he was a Saviour in the material sense. Not much has changed in the popular understanding of Saviour. In the well-watched movie, Titanic, two fictitious characters ride out on a voyage and find love. But the aged Rose, recounting her experiences claims a love beyond the human and leaps from love to claim salvation. I wish I could render you the intonation of her voice and her convincing mannerisms but I suppose if I could I’d be an actor. Instead, I give you merely the words, and let your memories or imaginations do the rest. She spoke of the character “Jack Dawson”. Jack saved me. He saved me in every possible way that a human being can be saved”.

And indeed Jack did, after a fashion save her. He saved her from an attempted suicide and certain death. He saved her from the social constructs of her time. He saved her from the control of her upper-class family.

I wonder how many people there are out there who watch such things and feed into the romantic views of salvation, expecting that some man, or some woman could solve all their problems of loneliness, fatherly control, and possibly even financial salvation. Even people in middle age leaving existing marriages because they believe that it’s this someone else who will save them from all the things their existing marriage has not.

To those tempted to such situations behold Mary on this fourth Sunday of Advent. If there ever was a time in which marriage could be romanticized by a young girl as a means of deliverance it was the time of Mary of Nazareth. It was a traditional culture. Marriage and family, house and home were not things put on the back burner until the biological clock ticks close to thirty-five or forty in our own state of industrialization. These were forefront issues discussed seriously from the moment of a child’s birth. How shall she be educated? How shall she live? Who will she marry? The story of Ruth in the Old Testament shows how a man could be considered a “kinsmen redeemer”; a Saviour.

While the girls around her were looking for that kind of salvation, for their own man who would act as Saviour and provide for them Mary was looking for something more.

I’m sure she thought of Joseph but he certainly isn’t a main concern or should I say #1 priority to her. Her focus was on the troublesome things she saw around her: injustice, cruelty, in short - sin. She was already experiencing, full force in her own life, judgment and injustice. The certain death sentence if she remained in Nazareth. Thoughts of death overcame youth’s natural predisposition to feelings of invincibility. She would learn at a young age the limits of protection to be offered by a mere man.

Instead, her priority was the Child she was carrying. More than that, her priority was God Himself. Therefore, crying out with words some scholars say were beyond her ability to compose she said:

“My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour”.

Where are you? What do you rejoice in? Are you the fictitious Rose looking for and even believing that your “Jack Dawson” will be your Saviour? Do you perhaps look as the Israelites did from the Old Testament Reading for a prophet, a deliverer, but in all the wrong places? Or are you just plain cynical saying, “Like that’s ever going to happen”. If such thoughts are your thoughts, or temptation to such thoughts are your temptations, then take heart!

Behold Mary. Hers is a confident song. Hers is a song of depth and not just some “corny love song” which you might expect from a teen age girl. Mary’s Song which we call “Magnificat” is an Ode to Love of the greatest degree. Her soul magnifies the Lord; her spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

This is why she calls Him Saviour. He dwells within her. The angel had told her:

"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>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, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

It is the answer to the question “How shall this be since I am a virgin” that really settles in her mind how he is Saviour.

Talk about miraculous births! Mary knew who she was. She had no delusions of grandeur. She had known where she stood on the social scale. She knew she was one of the little people. And so what was happening had the signature of God signed to it. From her knowledge of history she would have known that God always uses the little people. He uses the lowly and insignificant. Miraculous births had taken place before. ...

- Sarah at the age of 90 gave birth to Isaac.
- Isaac’s wife in turn, Rebekah seemingly could not conceive even after years of marriage but Isaac prayed and the twins Jacob and Esau were conceived to struggle in the womb and later outside it.
- A woman named Hannah, whose cry unto God, seemingly providing source material for Mary’s magnificat in many ways, asks for an answer to her prayer for a child and she gives birth to Samuel.
- Then Elizabeth, cousin of Mary conceives her son John likewise after much prayer in their aged condition.

Now Mary enters into the pattern. Yet this one holds a promise. “He shall be called the Son of the Most High”

Her Saviour is Divine. He must be to be a true Saviour. Human beings are limited. They cannot redeem a human being in every way as our fictitious character Rose claims. The Old Testament informed her of that.

Psalm 49:7 "No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him.

No man can pay the price, even if he had the Midas touch. Our sins indebt us so severely that there is no way out. Time would reveal what it would take. It would take a man who could die as a man. It would take a man who would sacrifice the price of a god. It is as St. Peter would preach: "You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

In the Christmas Season, Mary would not need to wait long to see the foreshadowing of the shed blood of her Son which would be needed to bring about our salvation from her Son.

Soon after Christmas holy Church celebrates the "Circumcision of our Lord".

<sup>21</sup>And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

I don't think I need to get too graphic on that point. Suffice to say, the 8 day old babe is already shedding his blood in conformity to the law. He is shedding his blood as a consequence of our sin. He is complying with all the strictures of the law which we are unable to comply with. Another few days after that, the Church hears blessed Simeon speak of the "sword which will pierce her own soul". Then Epiphany and the gifts of the wise men: "gold, frankincense and myrrh". The Wise men carrying the myrrh if not singing these words would at least be conveying the message of the words, "Myrrh is mine a blessed perfume; foreshadows a time of gathering gloom". Death. Sacrifice. It was all there from the beginning. The manger also proclaims the cross.

Sacrifice is the greatest kind of love. It is the true work of the Saviour. It is a work that can only be accomplished by Mary's Saviour Jesus Christ.

Some would rather that Christmas not be filled with the Cross. Yet this is why Mary would call Him Saviour. He is truly man that he might die and truly God that he might rise again. The two natures of Christ, mysteriously joined, is Christmas; the focus of a young maids heart. "Saviour" is the theme of her song. No mere man could do all that.

May we therefore sing the Magnificat anew. Indeed, let us sing it tonight and every night in Evening Prayer whether Advent or Lent, Christmas or Easter. It is the song of the ages. It is Mary's. By God's grace it may be our song also. **"May we rejoice in God our Saviour"**.

AMEN.