The text forms a part of the [daily office](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canonical_hours) in the [Roman Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) [Vespers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vespers) service, the [Lutheran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheranism) [Vespers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vespers_in_Lutheranism) service, and the [Anglican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican) services of [Evening Prayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evening_Prayer_(Anglican)), according to both the [*Book of Common Prayer*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Common_Prayer) and [*Common Worship*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Worship).

In [Orthodox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Church) liturgical practice, the *Magnificat* is usually sung during the [Matins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matins) service before the *[Irmos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irmos)* of the ninth ode of the [canon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canon_(hymnography)). After each biblical verse, i.e. as a [sticheron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sticheron), the following [megalynarion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megalynarion) or [troparion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troparion) is sung:

"More honourable than the [Cherubim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherub), and more glorious beyond compare than the [Seraphim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seraph), without corruption thou gavest birth to God the [Word](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logos#Use_in_Christianity): true [Theotokos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theotokos), we magnify thee."

the longest set of words spoken by a woman in the New Testament (and a poor, young, unmarried pregnant woman at that!).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor and theologian who was executed by the Nazis, called the Magnificat “the most passionate, the wildest, one might even say the most revolutionary hymn ever sung.”

Some countries — [such as India, Guatemala, and Argentina — have outright banned the Magnificat from being recited in liturgy or in public.](http://enemylove.com/subversive-magnificat-mary-expected-messiah-to-be-like/)

Many of the truths Mary expresses find a counterpart in [Hannah’s](https://www.gotquestions.org/Hannah-and-Samuel.html) prayer in [1 Samuel 2:1–10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam%202.1%E2%80%9310). The Magnificat also foreshadows many themes that are addressed later in the [book of Luke](https://www.gotquestions.org/Gospel-of-Luke.html) and in the ministry of Jesus.

In a style reminiscent of [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament) [poetry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry) and [song](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song), Mary praises the Lord in alignment with this structure:

1. Mary rejoices that she has the privilege of giving birth to the promised Messiah ([Luke 1:46–48](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A46%E2%80%9348&version=NRSV)).
2. She glorifies God for His power, holiness, and mercy ([Luke 1:49–50](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A49%E2%80%9350&version=NRSV)).
3. Mary looks forward to God transforming the world through the Messiah. The proud will be brought low, and the humble will be lifted up; the hungry will be fed, and the rich will go without ([Luke 1:51–53](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A51%E2%80%9353&version=NRSV)).
4. Mary exalts God because He has been faithful to His promise to Abraham ([Luke 1:54–55](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A54%E2%80%9355&version=NRSV); see God's promise to Abraham in [Gen 12:1-3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gen+12%3A1-3&version=NRSV)).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnificat#cite_note-5)

**Mary’s Song: The Magnificat**

**46**And Mary said:

“My soul exalts the Lord,  
**47**And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.  
**48**For He has had regard for the humble state of His bond-servant;  
For behold, 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**And His mercy is to generation after generation  
Toward those who fear Him.  
**51**He has done mighty deeds with His arm;  
He has scattered *those who were* proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
**52**He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones,  
And has exalted those who were humble.  
**53**He has filled the hungry with good things,  
And sent the rich away empty-handed.  
**54**He has given help to His servant Israel,  
In remembrance of His mercy,  
**55**Just as He spoke to our fathers,  
To Abraham and his descendants forever.”

**56**Mary stayed with her about three months, and *then* returned to her home.

**KJV**

**46**And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

**47**And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

**48**For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

**49**For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

**50**And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

**51**He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

**52**He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

**53**He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

**54**He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

**55**As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

**56**And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.