What does a little, Jewish girl have to do with the gospel? For Richard Rohr, she has everything to do with it. In this video, Rohr helps us to see how God has turned the world on its head and used this young girl to communicate God’s transformative message.

Questions for Reflection

1. The video begins with the question, “What depths does Mary’s Song take you to?” Rohr responds, “We call it the Magnificat from the Latin. We chanted it everyday at vespers. Some people say Mary’s song, the Magnificat, is perhaps the most concise statement of the gospel that we have.”

   Take some time looking at Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55). How is it a “concise statement of the gospel”? What does it say that God would do?

2. Rohr explains that “The public recitation of Mary’s was declared illegal in Argentina during a three or four-year period because they are smart enough to recognize that almost every other line has huge political implications.”

   What political implications does the Magnificat have? How does it serve to subvert the status quo, i.e. what about it that disrupts our view of the world?

3. Rohr observes that “We Americans don’t want to admit it, but this isn’t our worldview.” Rohr adds, “We can’t have it both ways. We just can’t. We can’t keep worshipping our system and not see very often, not always, it comes into direct conflict with the gospel.”

   How is Mary’s song not the worldview for many people in North America? What is the dominant political narrative in North America regarding the poor and disenfranchised?

4. Rohr sees that “[Mary’s song] is the most wonderful coming together of religious liberation, personal liberation, and ethnic-social, cultural liberation.”

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1 Mary’s song is called the Magnificat because it comes from the first line in the Latin Vulgate: Magnificat anima mea Dominum (My soul magnifies the Lord).
In what ways do we need liberation? How are people in North America not as free as they would like to believe?

5. We often do not think of Mary as a political figure, but Rohr says, “She knew that God was turning the world upside down.”

In what ways is Mary a political figure? What does it mean to us and the church that “God was turning the world upside down”?

6. Rohr observes, “If God can choose someone as ordinary as me to bear the divine into the world, then we better be ready to be surprised by where the divine is coming from.”

How can we allow God to bring something “divine into the world”? How might we start looking for God in places we normally would not expect?

How might the life of Mary reveal what God can do with people who are seemingly insignificant?

7. Rohr talks about how music opens up the right brain and how “singing is probably better” in communicating the message of the Gospel.

How can our churches do a better job at communicating the gospel in ways other than sermons and lectures?

Why do we need to listen differently to the gospel?

8. Rohr concludes by talking about how “teachers of the Enneagram” say that Mary “is probably a five” because “she stored these things in her heart” or a nine because “she is standing at the foot of the cross.” Rohr is speaking a personality model that helps people better understand themselves. The word, enneagram, comes from the nine (ennea in Greek) personality types and the word for writing (gramma).

How does God use our various personalities to help communicate the gospel?

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