

## More About MAGNIFICAT

**Magnificat** is one of three canticles from the opening chapters of the Gospel of Luke which are sung at prayer services known as the **Lauds** or **Liturgy of the Hours**. **Magnificat** is the evening office (Vespers), while **Benedictus** is morning office (Matins), and **Nunc Dimittus** is night office (Compline).

Also known as the **Canticle of Mary**, **Magnificat** is a canticle found in the Gospel of Luke (1:46–55). It is traditionally incorporated into the liturgical services of various Christian denominations, including the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, Lutheran Churches, and the Anglican Communion.

The name “Magnificat” comes from the Latin incipit of the text, which begins with “Magnificat anima mea Dominum” (meaning “My soul magnifies the Lord”). In this hymn, Mary rejoices and praises God upon her visitation to her cousin Elizabeth.

The *Magnificat* is one of the earliest Christian hymns and is frequently recited within the Liturgy of the Hours in Western Christianity, particularly during the evening prayer service known as Vespers. Its profound words continue to resonate as a testament to Mary’s faith and devotion.

Although not part of the text from Luke, the *Gloria Patri* is usually appended to the end of settings of the *Magnificat*, including this one.

### Vulgate text (Luke 1:46-55):

Magnificat ánima mea Dóminum.  
Et exultávit spíritus meus: in Deo salutári meo.  
Quia respéxit humilitátem ancíllae suae:  
Ecce enim ex hoc beátam me dicent omnes generatiónes.  
Quia fécit mihi mágna qui pótens est: et sánctum nómen eius.  
Et misericórdia eius in progénies et progénies timéntibus eum.  
Fécit poténtiam in bráchio suo: dispérsit supérbos mente cordis sui.  
Depósuit poténtes de sede: et exaltávit húmiles.  
Esuriéntes implévit bonis: et dívites dimísit inánes  
Suscépit Ísrael púerum suum: recordátus misericórdiae suae.  
Sicut locútus est ad patres nostros: Ábraham, et sémini eius in saecula.

Glória Patri, et Fílio, et Spirítui Sancto,  
Sicut erat in princípío, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculórum. Amen.

English translation:

My soul doth magnify the Lord.  
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.  
Because He hath regarded the humility of His slave:  
For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.  
Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His name.  
And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him.  
He hath shewed might in His arm: He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.  
He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.  
He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.  
He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy:  
As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever.

Glory be the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forever and ever, Amen.

Over the centuries, numerous composers have produced a great many musical settings of the *Magnificat*. Some of the better-known of these include those by Antonio Vivaldi, J.S. Bach and his son C.P.E. Bach, Anton Bruckner, Sergei Rachmaninoff, John Rutter, and Krzysztof Penderecki.

**Magnificat** has been recorded for commercial release by the Kühn Choir of Prague and is available on their album **Celestial Voices Vol. II** from Navona Records. See the Discography page on my website for more information.