

# Blessed are you among women

A reflection by Rev Dr Michael Paterson, shared at the St Margaret's eucharist on 6 February 2022, when we celebrated both Candlemas and the 70th anniversary of the accession of HM Queen Elizabeth  
The readings were Malachi 3.1-4, Hebrews 2.14-18 and Luke 2.22-40



On a day with so much to celebrate,  
let's hear it for the women,  
the leading ladies in today's feast,  
whose voices are never heard,  
whose stories are told by men.

Let's hear it for Anna  
the silent prophet  
doing what she has always done  
night and day in the Temple  
praising God and keeping watch.  
Simeon swings by and steals her lines  
but his time is up  
while hers has just begun.

At an age when respectable ladies would  
have long been retired  
she saw – as only a woman could –  
the whole of history come together.

Jesus' birth: her beginning.  
She had a gospel to proclaim  
and lifting up her skirts  
ran to do what women have done  
from the beginning  
to tell tales that spread like wildfire  
about the latest thing that is happening  
and in so doing  
wove ever-widening circles of kinship  
among women whom men forget.

**Blessed are you Anna  
Prophet and Evangelist  
Blessed are you among women.**

Let's hear it for Mary,  
the most contested figure in history.  
A virgin? A mother?  
A pin up girl for Catholics.  
Sent to Coventry by Reformers.

At an age  
when marriage lay ahead  
she saw – as only a woman could –  
her name  
and her plans  
go down in history.

Jesus birth – her agony:  
a sword that would pierce  
not only her heart  
but her reputation too.

She had a gospel to proclaim, and  
defying the gender roles of her day –  
did what women have been doing  
ever since:

penned the lyrics of a freedom song  
that even Protestants sing daily.  
“the mighty will be toppled from their  
high chairs” *Magnificat!*  
“the underdog will see justice”  
*Magnificat!*  
“the poor will never be hungry again.”  
*Magnificat!*

**Blessed are you Mary  
Midwife of God  
Blessed are you among women.**





Let's hear it for Elizabeth  
Queen and public servant  
doing what she was born to do  
living out her destiny  
fulfilling her duty.

At an age  
when family life offered others privacy  
she saw – as only a woman could –  
that her place in history  
was to offer her whole life  
with no *ifs* or *buts*  
in service.

Her accession: a sacrifice.

Her sceptre: a sword.

Her crown: a weight to bear.

She had a gospel to proclaim  
and – for seventy years –  
has outshone the men of power  
who served themselves  
and not others.

**Blessed are you Elizabeth  
Faithful Servant and Queen.  
Blessed are you among women.**

And let's hear it for  
*every* woman  
in this congregation.

In an age  
when it's easier to come out as gay  
than it is to come out as Christian,  
let's hear it for every woman here  
who will go down in history  
because she dares to believe –  
despite all the odds –  
that God is worth talking about  
gossiping about  
serving and loving.

Let's hear it for every mother  
and teacher  
and Messy Church helper  
who passes on the Good News  
to the next generation.

Let's hear it for every woman  
who tells her children  
that they too – like Anna –  
can be evangelists  
that they too – like Mary –  
can sing of freedom and justice  
that they too – like Elizabeth –  
can live lives of faithful service

**Blessed are you Dear Sisters**  
(and blessed are we men  
who stand in your shadows)  
**Blessed are you among women.**

Amen.