

When I was about 5 or 6 years old, my grandmother gave me a magnifying glass - you know, the kind with a handle and a lens - like a Sherlock Holmes magnifying glass. And I loved to use it to get in on things and see them up close and personal.

My mom was a bit concerned - giving a lump of glass to a small boy. And rightly so. One of the other things I enjoyed doing with the magnifying glass was to hold it out at an arm's length so that it would flip the world upside-down.

That wasn't too dangerous - until I would walk around, with the magnifying glass at an arm's length watching the inverted world go by.

During the summer, it was a great tool for burning holes in leaves - until all I could see were dots in front of me from staring at the sun focused onto a leaf.

It was only a matter of time before I broke the handle and the metal band that held the magnifying glass. Surprisingly, I still have the glass. And even more surprisingly, with the exception of a couple of nicks on the edges, it's still in one piece.

Today is the Solemnity of the Assumption of Our Lady - the patronal feast of the Diocese of Saginaw. Our Cathedral is St. Mary's of the Assumption; and this is sort of a "family" celebration for our 11 county diocese.

In the Gospel, Mary sings her great song of praise at the end of the first chapter of Saint Luke's Gospel. In the current translation it reads:

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior*

This hymn is part of the Church's Evening Prayer, or Vespers, prayed by every priest and religious daily. The Latin title for this hymn is the *Magnificat*. And the word *magnificat* in Latin (*megalyno* in Greek) means "to magnify."

That is, Our Lady's hymn of praise to God begins (in some translations) as:

My soul magnifies the Lord . . .

And what an amazing way to look at this, as well as to reflect on our own relationship with the Almighty.

We can ask the question: “How does my soul *magnify* the Lord?” Or do we even try to do anything? Sometimes our souls are rather opaque - like a darkened lens that blocks most of the light. Other times our souls, held at a distance from God, tend to invert or distort the reality of His grace and love.

Through prayer, through contemplation of the Almighty God, through reading of Scripture, and by utilizing the sanctifying graces of the Sacraments we have received – we are able to ‘focus in’ as it were with our souls on God, and *magnify* His love in the world.

Today as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ – let us examine where our soul is in relationship to God the Almighty. And in reflecting on our relationship, let us ask for the grace to *magnify* the Lord with our souls ... whether in the past we’ve been obscuring, or darkening, or inverting, or distorting ... today, let us make a firm purpose of amendment to receive the graces and enter into a relationship with God where we can confidently say, with Our Lady, “*my soul magnifies the Lord.*”