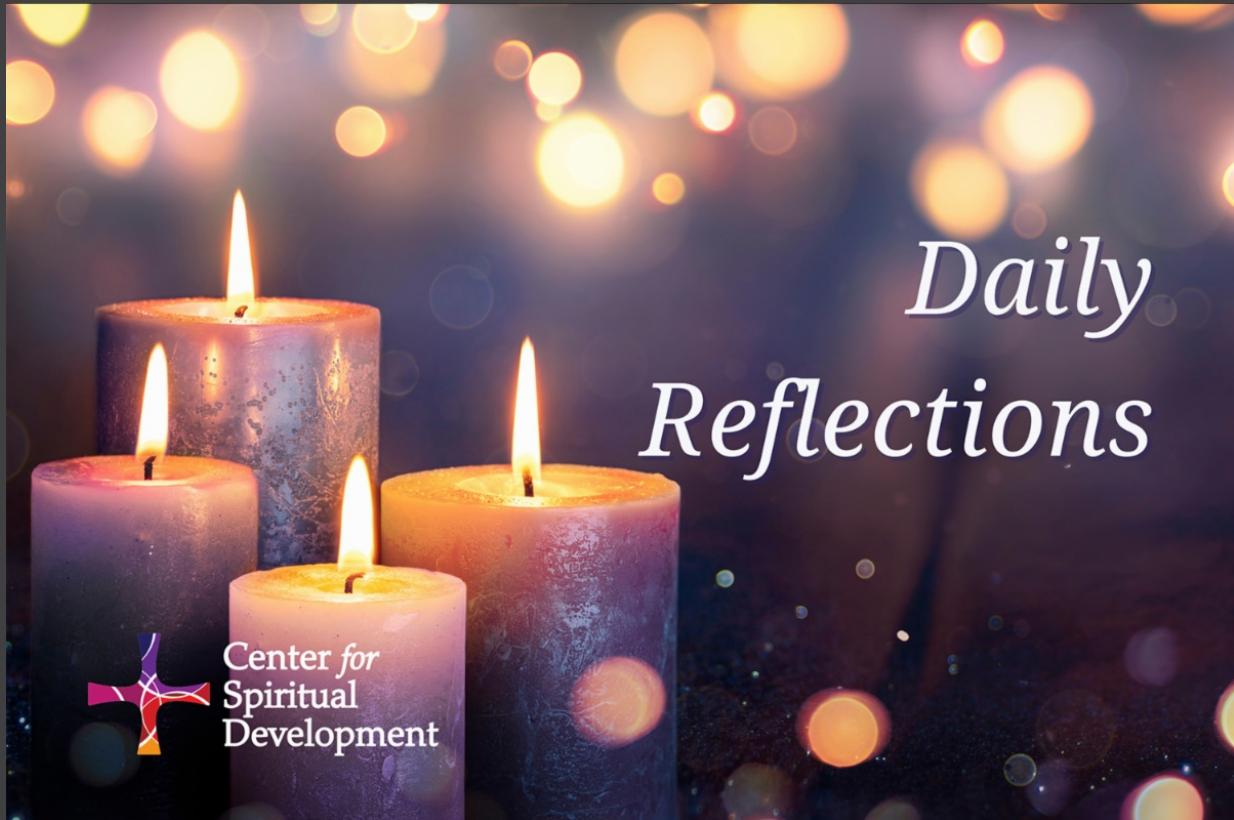


December 12, 2025



THE LORD WILL DWELL AMONG YOU

By David C. Robinson, SJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

See, I am coming to dwell among you, says the LORD. Many nations shall join themselves to the LORD on that day, and they shall be his people. “I will live among you,” declares the Lord. The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

ZECHARIAH 2:14-17

Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever and of his Kingdom there will be no end.”

LUKE 1:30-33

Reflection

Zechariah was a 6th century prophet who ministered to Jewish communities returning to the homeland after the Babylonian exile. He espoused an inspiring and hope-filled vision of the intentions of God for the people as they reclaimed their identity in their land and their Holy City. This spirit of optimism and popular anticipation led to the Second Temple period (after 515 BCE), with a reaffirmation of the role of the Covenant among the people. They discovered again a sense of cultural unity and strength. Zechariah encouraged the returned communities to entrust their future to the One who walked with them, always and intimately, in triumph and disaster.

This spiritual unity was deconstructed by the time of the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Jesus ministered in the midst of this collapse, and his teaching helped the people to center their faith and community in the God of their fathers, beyond any historical or political location or practice. Indeed, he pointed the way to a path with God that was grounded in Spirit rather than the traditions that had been broken in their homeland.

Mary would have matured as a humble woman, not enmeshed in the concrete struggles of Jerusalem and other urban centers. Her faith in God was one grounded in the daily walk of trust and fidelity, not one grounded in rubrics or structures. She followed the path of the Torah in a very human and uncluttered way. When the message of the angel came, it was her fidelity to her God that undergirded her gentle “Yes.” This context of abiding faith shaping compassionate humanity remained at the heart of Christian life in the ensuing centuries in the post-Roman context, when European imperialism began to move with such power through the entire world. One result of such colonial strategies was the missionary effort of thousands among the countless indigenous tribes and cultures. Conversions were beyond numbering. In the midst of such cultural transformation, the presence of Mary as the Blessed Mother of the poor stood lovingly in the foreground.

In the 17th century, Mary appeared four times to Juan Diego, a poor indigenous man, missioning him to approach the local bishop, to urge the prelate to construct a church in her honor. Initially turned away, he returned again and again. On the third visit, the famed miracle of the roses (in wintry Mexico) and the image of Mary the Guadalupana in Juan Diego’s *tilma* (a cloak of coarse cactus fiber) gave birth to the story of the one who said, “Am I not here, I who am your mother?” Her proclamation of maternal compassion became a source of spiritual affirmation and awakening to millions in the

colonial reaches of Spain and Portugal. To this day, reverence for the “Guadalupana” is central to Catholicism in the Western Hemisphere, moving through rural and urban, indigenous and post-colonial communities, promoting a spirit of tender and gracious love for God and neighbor. Mary remains the mother of faith to millions, guiding us with gracious presence on our path to deeper communion with God, and to lives of quiet faith.



La Guadalupana Abides above her People
Image by David C. Robinson, SJ

For Pondering

- Has Mary been an influential model in the development of your personal spiritual life?
- Has the Guadalupana stood as a model and mother-figure in your family or religious culture?
- How would you share your own experience of Mary's life with those in your social or spiritual circle?

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