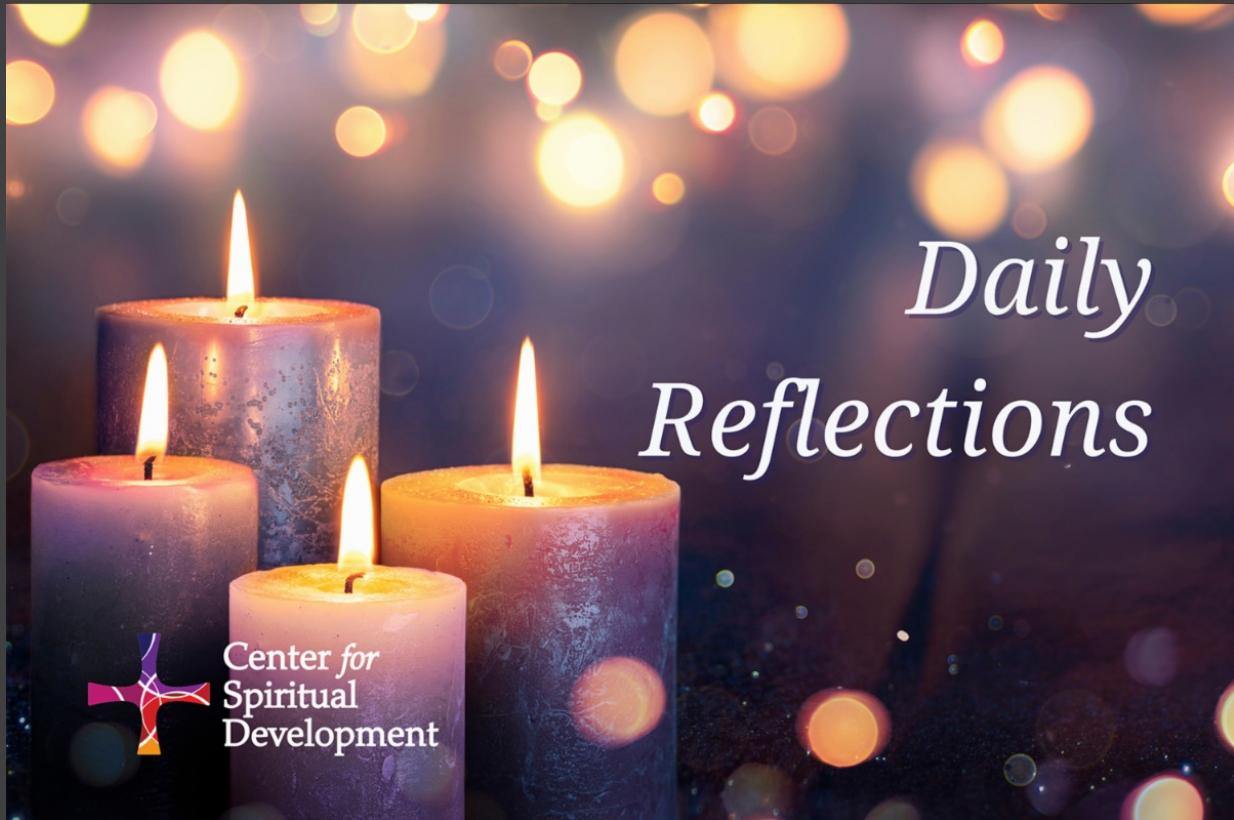


December 17, 2025



ROOTS OF BELONGING

By Sister Jane DeLisle, CSJ

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ,
the son of David, the son of Abraham...*

MATTHEW 1:1-1

Reflection

Wednesday of the Third Week of Advent features a Gospel that at first glance seems bit boring. **Matthew 1:1-17** recounts the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. The lineup of distant relatives in Jesus' family tree offers significant insight into the reality of the human Jesus coming into the world.

Perhaps we can identify with Jesus since it is the "in thing" to trace one's genealogy using one of the research companies that specialize in this task.

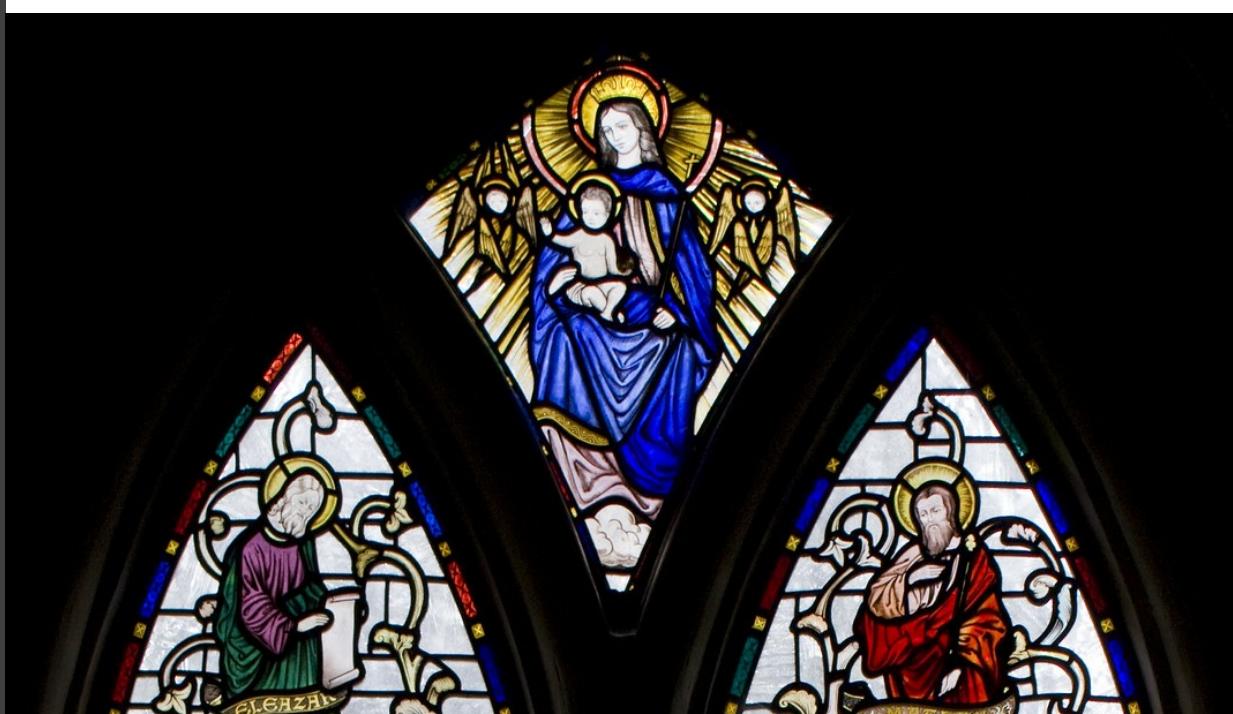
Henry Louis Gates offers wonderful insights into people's heritage on the TV program "Finding Your Roots." Tracing one's heritage assists people to discover a sense of belonging as ancestral stories are told. It solidifies their identity and forges emotional bonds.

Today's scripture provides the ancestry of Jesus out of which he lives his own personal story and purpose. Every person named leaves a mark in the Hebrew Testament. It offers us proof of Jesus' credible grounding as a man "*who did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.*" (Philippians 2:6) The series of fourteen generations of names grounds Jesus in his human identity.

Furthermore, the lineup of characters ranges from virtuous, God-fearing, trustworthy people to people of dubious reputation revealed as all too human and vulnerable to sin. Each one lived by the lights of their upbringing and personal decisions, relying on grace ... or not. Some made choices for the good, others -- finding the errors of their ways -- turned toward God, while still others paid little heed to God in their lives.

While I do not know for sure, I bet my own heritage -- rooted in human nature and God's grace -- may be similar. Though the names change, my ancestors lived by their own light shed on their experiences, choices, and opportunities. And so do I. Each moment is a new opportunity to gain experience, be transformed, and respond to all that life puts before me.

To live by grace is to be discerning, to be self-reflective, and to listen to the whispering of the Holy One. The choice is mine to know God, to follow the way of Jesus, and to be a witness to the next generation who stands on my shoulders.





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For Pondering

Ask yourself:

- What is my lineage?

- What influence does my family of origin have on me?
- How does knowing the genealogy of Jesus influence my understanding and acceptance of him?

For Prayer

*I REJOICE in you, my God,
for you have called me by name and loved me into life.
Teach me the way to live in and through your loving presence and grace.
Open the eyes of my heart that I may discover you
in the ordinariness of my life.
Hold me close so I might be faithful in all my days.
I desire to love, serve, and know you more each day
and live in the flow of your gracious love and presence.
Come Lord Jesus!*

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