

September 8, 2025

Daily Reflections



GOD'S PROMISE BORN IN THE LIFE OF MARY

By David C. Robinson, SJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

Brothers and sisters: we know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

ROMANS 8:28-29

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will

Reflection

Throughout Jewish and Christian traditions, there has been a community awareness of the active presence of God in the unfolding of human history. With the passage of the centuries, theological speculation about the ‘agency’ of God has come to the fore, putting more emphasis on attributes than relationships. Scripture, in both the Old and New Testaments, offers us a uniquely personal glimpse into God’s mode of being ‘with us’ on the path of history. In the earliest stories of the Pentateuch, the very birthing of God’s people is an intimate weaving of God’s spirit (*ruach*, or breath of life) into the fertility of human life and community. As generations wane and new lineages emerge, there is a repeating narrative of age and/or infertility, symbolizing that the vitality of the people is deeply in need of new life drawn from the union of God with human generativity. We see this in Abraham and Sarah with the birth of Isaac, Elkanah and Hannah with the birth of Samuel, and Jacob and Rachel with the birth of Joseph. The enlivening presence of God ignites human fecundity to renew the divine promise through the centuries.

The same narrative continues in the New Testament, with the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist. God’s intimacy within the unfolding of the communities of faith takes a surprising turn with the advent of the life story of Mary. Catholic tradition embraces the extra-scriptural history of Joachim and Anne, who are integral to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, the unique merging of God’s saving spirit with the birth of Mary. She continues the divine history of God’s intimate union with humanity through the conception and birth of Jesus.

All of these ebbs and flows of divine initiative and the regeneration of human destiny in God provide a spiritual tapestry of our unquenchable need for the tender simplicity of God’s touch in the unfolding of our personal lives and our continual communal rebirth. The frontiers of our speculation about God’s action in our world and ourselves must always give way to the exquisite simplicity of divine love and tenderness in nurturing our path through time and circumstances. Scripture and tradition through the centuries have cautioned us to temper our urge to analyze and categorize who God is and how God acts. The mystery of our unending renewal in the timeless grace of God’s ‘breath of life’ is both a blessing and a caution to let God be God, in the endless fulfillment of the divine promise to be with us in the shifting tides of human history—the eternal birth and rebirth of all that we have been and have yet to

become.



God's Face
Image created by David C. Robinson, SJ

For Pondering

- How do you experience the 'rebirth' of God within you in the shifting tides of spiritual ebbs and flows in your life?
 - Have you noticed the unique ways that God's 'breath of life' enters into your day-to-day walk of life?
 - Do you find yourself trying to analyze or categorize God's presence in your life and lose sight of the simple intimacy of love within you?
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