

Daily Meditation 12-15-22

Our Lady of Guadalupe: Remembering Our Cosmic Mother

Good morning.

In this morning's daily meditation, we're sharing a poem from Rafael Jesús González from the Central American tradition that speaks to Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose feast day was Monday this week. And as I pointed out yesterday, there is a feminine dimension to this time of Advent. Not only the feast day of Guadalupe is celebrated, but also that of the Immaculate Conception, which is December 8.

So I think it's appropriate to go back to one of the really important sources of Mariology in the gospels, which is in the first chapter of Luke, when Mary is said to have gone to visit her cousin Elizabeth, and says -- this is 1:41 --

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said that Mary was pregnant. "Of all women, you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of my Lord? The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy."

She also said,

Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.

And with this, then Mary responds in this beautiful and rich poem which we've come to call the Magnificat. And it's really a very stylized poem; it draws on many scriptural verses. It draws on Hannah's canticle in I Samuel 2:1-10. It draws on Psalm 103, Psalm 111, Job 5:11 and 12:19, Psalm 98:3, Psalm 107, and Isaiah 41:8-9.

So you can see it's a highly crafted poem or canticle. And it's not saying that these are the exact words that came out of Mary's mouth. But it is saying that the spirit of Mary is being shared in this poem. And it was put together by scholars, really, in the first century who knew all the Jewish scriptures and brought them together in this poem in Mary's name. So it does leave us with a sense of the spirit of Mary that the first generation of Christians was honoring.

So here's what Mary says.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exalts in God my savior. Because God has looked upon his lowly handmaid, yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed. For the Almighty has done great things for me: holy is his name. And his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him. He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones, and exalted the lowly.

This is profoundly political. The Mary depicted here is not at all bashful, shy, or self-conscious. She is committed to justice and compassion. She goes on:

The hungry, he has filled with good things, the rich sent away empty. He has come to the help of Israel, his servant, mindful of His mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors of His mercy to Abraham, and to his descendants forever.

We are told that Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then went back home.

So what we're left with is an image that also comes through in the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe: a holy woman who is strong, and who speaks out for the oppressed, for the poor, and stands up and speaks truth to those who are powerful.

So there is a profound lesson in the Guadalupe story where later Guadalupe spoke to a young, indigenous young man in his own language, ten years after the Spanish had conquered his people.

And so Guadalupe too has a profound political dimension to her message and to her presence.

Clearly, the feminine that we're talking about, in December, these feast days, is strong. And it is mixed with the warriorhood of the healthy masculine as well. The masculine is very strong in this Mary presented in the Gospels and in the Guadalupe story.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.