

Reflection Monday Advent Week 3 St John of the Cross 2020

St John of the Cross was born in Fontiveros, Spain, about 1542. He joined the Carmelite friars. In 1568 Saint Teresa of Ávila persuaded him to pioneer a reform of the Carmelites. This was a difficult and dangerous task: he suffered imprisonment and severe punishment from his own order and Church authorities. He died at the monastery of Ubeda in Andalusia on 14th December 1591: the monks who initially treated him as the worst of sinners, recognised his sanctity by the time he died and his funeral was the occasion of great jubilation. His writings include two major mystical poems: *The Spiritual Canticle*, *The Living Flame of Love*, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, and *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (the last two works comment on the same poem) – he is considered one of the great poets of the Spanish language – and detailed commentaries on them and the spiritual truths they convey. He was canonized in 1726 and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1926.

Despite facing major difficulties including the Church, John of the Cross persevered in his reform of the Carmelites. Maybe it was because of the hardships and sufferings he faced that he wrote such beautiful works that have subsequently inspired, guided and helped many down through the ages. His reforms were eventually good not just for the Carmelites but for the whole Church.

Let the master speak:

- “Strive to preserve your heart in peace; let no event of this world disturb it.”
- “The endurance of darkness is the preparation for great light.”
- “Contemplation is nothing else but a secret, peaceful, and loving infusion of God, which if admitted, will set the soul on fire with the Spirit of love.”
- “In tribulation immediately draw near to God with confidence, and you will receive strength, enlightenment, and instruction.”
- “Take God for your spouse and friend and walk with him continually, and you will not sin and will learn to love, and the things you must do will work out prosperously for you.”
- “It is great wisdom to know how to be silent and to look at neither the remarks, nor the deeds, nor the lives of others.”
- “To saints, their very slumber is a prayer.”
- “In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone.”
- “If a man wishes to be sure of the road he treads, he must close his eyes and walk in the dark.”
- “Love consists not in feeling great things but in having great detachment and in suffering for the Beloved.”

A lorry from Abergwyngregyn is driving through Llandudno, in Wales when it collides with a Nissan Qashqai. The truck then swerves down the road and hits a car from Bwlchgwyn, injuring the two otorhinolaryngologists inside. One of them, suffering from Schistosomiasis, has a myocardial infarction. A bystander witnesses the entire event and quickly calls to report the accident on his Huawei. The emergency operator asks the bystander, "What

happened?"

Reply: "It's hard to say."