

Reflection Saturday Advent Week 2 – 2020

The shrine of **Our Lady of Guadalupe**, near Mexico City, is one of the most celebrated places of pilgrimage in North America. On 9th December 1531, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to an Indian convert, Juan Diego, and left with him a picture of herself impressed upon his cloak. Devotion to Mary under this title has continually increased, and today she is the Patroness of the Americas.

Advent is about letting *the face of God shine on us so that we shall be saved*. Moses encountered God on Mount Sinai and received the ten commandments. Returning to his people his face shone so brightly he had to cover it. When God's face shines on us, we reflect that light which is why Christ's birth is so important. His light brings healing, forgiveness, love, peace and joy to our lives and to our world. In thinking about Elijah, consider this: although certainly not a holy one of God, he could be *the government!!* For all its failings and errors, it has called us to change the way we live and, if we live by the rules it has laid down, we will be saved from the virus and possibly death. This year, the word Salvation is much more poignant in the face of the pandemic. By keeping the rules, we are also preventing others from catching the virus. Living our lives in God's way and by God's rules, that is loving God and our neighbour and caring for the environment, we are saving others from certain death in the future. Seeking healing and being healed, we bring healing to others. God's healing always leads to Joy. With the vaccine on our doorsteps, we will soon be freed from the worry it has caused and the restrictions under which we are living. It will be replaced by increased Joy. Advent has taught us to be patient. It has prepared us for the patience we will need before the virus is finally conquered. The joy, when that happens, will be beyond words. In the meantime:

Each day holds a surprise. But only if we expect it can we see, hear, or feel it when it comes. Let's not be afraid to receive each day's surprise, whether it comes to us as sorrow or as joy It will open a new place in our hearts, a place where we can welcome new friends and celebrate more fully our shared humanity. — Henri Nouwen

A very successful business man believed he had a vocation late in life entered the seminary and was ordained. One Saturday afternoon he goes to hear confessions when he meets an old friend.

'How do you like the new job?' the friend asked.

'Well,' said the new priest, 'The pay's not so good and the hours are long.' Then, pointing to the confessional, he said, 'But what I do like is that in this business, the customer is always wrong!' "