

# **MORNING MEDITATION**

## **Friday, Second Week of Advent**

**Simplicity leads us to act simply,  
without admixture of hypocrisy and artifice.**  
(Saint Vincent de Paul)

### **Isaiah 48:17-19**

Isaiah continued to empower his people with confidence. Those who listen to God and His way will live in God's presence - "their name will never be blotted out from my presence". Because God will teach them what is good for them and show them the way they should walk. **Listen! Be still and know that I am God!**

### **Psalm 1**

**Happy the man, who follows not the counsel of the wicked,  
Nor walks in the way of sinners, nor sits in the company of the insolent,  
But delights in the Law of the Lord and meditates on his law day and night.**

### **Mathew 11:16-19**

Jesus challenged his listeners on their attitude. No matter what was suggested, they did not respond and no matter what was offered, they found fault with it. They had an attitude problem!

**Reflect on your attitude! Reflect on the need to remain open, welcoming, listening....**

John's asceticism was called "madness" and Jesus' sociability was named "laxness of morals". They found ground for criticism either way. When people do not want to listen to truth, they will easily find excuse for not listening. They remain stubbornly unresponsive no matter what is offered. Grown men and women can become like "spoiled children" who refuse to play no matter what the game is, refuse to dance or sing no matter what the occasion is.

**Reflect on your own quality of presence! Your responsiveness! Your openness!**

Jesus says, "Wisdom is shown to be right by her deeds" (last verse of today's Gospel). The Jews criticized John for his ascetical life, for his isolation in the desert, but he moved men's hearts to God as they had never been moved for centuries. They criticized Jesus for mixing too much in the ordinary and with the ordinary folks, but in him people found a new life, a new goodness, a new truth, a new power to live, a new spirit to love and a new access to God.

**Reflect on how wonderful it would be if we could stop judging people and communities with our own prejudices and welcome people as they are, even when their ways are different from ours!**

## **Saint of the Day, December 9 - St. Juan Diego and 36 other saints are remembered this day**

Saint Juan Diego was born in 1474 as Cuauhtlatoatzin, a native to Mexico. He became the first Roman Catholic indigenous saint from the Americas. Following the early death of his father, Juan Diego was taken to live with his uncle. When a group of 12 Franciscan missionaries arrived in Mexico in 1524, he and his wife, Maria Lucia, converted to Catholicism and were among the first to be baptized in the region. Juan Diego was very committed to his new life and would walk long distances to receive religious instruction at the Franciscan mission station.

On December 9, 1531, Juan Diego was in a hurry to make it to Mass and celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. However, he was stopped by the beautiful sight of a radiant woman who introduced herself, in his native tongue the "ever-perfect holy Mary." Mary told Juan Diego that she was the mother of all those who lived in his land and asked him to request the local bishop to build a chapel in her honor on Tepeyac Hill, which was the site of a former pagan temple.

Bishop Juan de Zumarraga was skeptical of the story of Juan Diego and needed time to reflect on the request. Later, on the same day, Juan Diego encountered the Virgin Mary a second time. He tried to explain to her that he was not an important person, and so not the right person for the task, but she insisted that he was the man she wanted. Juan Diego returned to the Bishop the next day and repeated his request, but now the Bishop asked for proof or a sign that the apparition was real.

Juan Diego went straight to Tepeyac and, once again, encountered the Virgin Mary. After explaining to her what the Bishop asked, she agreed and told him she'd provide him with proof on the next day, December 11. However, on the next day, Juan Diego's uncle became very sick and he was obligated to stay and care for him. Juan Diego set out to find a priest for his uncle.

The Virgin Mary intercepted Juan Diego. He explained his situation and promised to return after finding a priest for his uncle. Mary assured him that his uncle would be cured. She then asked him to collect the flowers growing on the hill. He obeyed and found many flowers blooming in December on the rocky land. He filled his tilma (cloak) with flowers and returned to Mary. The Virgin Mary arranged the flowers within his cloak and told him that he should present this as the sign to the bishop. When Juan

Diego found the bishop, he opened his cloak, and the bishop was presented with a miraculous imprinted image of the Virgin Mary on the flower-filled cloak.

The next day, Juan Diego found his uncle fully healed from his illness. His uncle explained he, too, saw the Virgin Mary. She also instructed him on her desires to have a church built on Tepeyac Hill. she also told him that she wanted to be known with the title of Guadalupe. News of Juan Diego's miracle quickly spread, and he became very well-known. However, Juan Diego always remained a humble man.

The bishop first kept Juan Diego's imprinted cloak in his private chapel, but then placed it on public display in the church built on Tepeyac Hill the next year. Juan Diego moved into a little hermitage on Tepeyac Hill and lived a solidarity life of prayer and work. He remained there until his death on December 9, 1548, 17 years after the first apparition.

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