

Pastoral Reflection
3rd Sunday of Advent
December 12, 2021

This Advent we are lifting up Mary the Undoer of Knots to ask her to intercede in our personal knots (obstacles to grace) and the social knots of Climate Change, Clericalism, Prejudice and Family Knots. This week we are challenged to examine the biases in our lives lest they morph into prejudice. In order to assist us in the effort I offer the example of another Lady, Our lady of Guadalupe whose feast is this Sunday. She aided the Aztecs in resisting the prejudice of the conquistadors and the Catholic missionary clergy. She is the "brown-skinned" mother! And she wanted the Aztecs to be treated with dignity. Not only were hundreds of thousands of the indigenous people slaughtered by the Spanish but over in Spain the theologians were debating whether the Indians had souls. The Lady helped Juan Diego to face the Spanish bishop to help him recognize that the Aztecs were also created in God's image. On Juan Diego's final visit before Bishop Zumarraga as he opened his tilma (an outer cloak) the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared (that tilma is still in the basilica in Mexico City). And as he opened his tilma, flowers fell to the floor. For the Aztecs flowers meant truth (for us they mean love and/or beauty). So, Juan Diego "spoke truth to power". The bishop then agreed to recognize Juan Diego's people as God's children and proceeded to build the chapel that Our Lady wanted on Aztec holy ground.

Folks, let's gather the flowers (as symbols of truth) and lay them before the powers that oppress, displace and/or demean. Too many lie and disparage people of color, the migrants, the refugees, the physical and/or mentally challenged, the LGBTQ individuals, the homeless, the incarcerated etc. And let's also come to grips with our own biases (which we all have) lest they grip us and we try to make light of God's image in others.

Our nation, our church, our local community are all knotted by prejudice. Let us help people to rejoice in and learn from our differences. May Our Lady Undoer of Knots assist us in undoing prejudice and may Our Lady of Guadalupe give us the courage to lay the flowers of truth.

Here are the messages that Our Lady of Guadalupe delivered to Juan Diego:

*My little ones, my sons, my daughters, I am here.
Me, your Mother.
Do not be afraid.
I am Mother of all who dwell in this land.
Do not let your heart be troubled by anything.
Are you not under my protections?
You are in the crease of my cloak, the fold of my arms.
Do you need anything else?
Am I not the fountain of joy?
Do not fear any sickness or anguish. Am I not your health?
Put this in your heart. Do not lose faith.
You are under my care. I am your mother.
You need to know that the world welcomes you.
You need to believe that the arms of life embrace you.
You need to remember, always, that you are loved.*



Fr. Jack (he/his)