



# Advent Reflection

**Day #9**

**Monday, December 7**

Isaiah 35:1-10 Luke 5:17-26

The hand came out of the crowd and taking my wrist, pulled me closer to the rocky wall of Massabielle Grotto in Lourdes, and placed my palm on its pilgrim-worn surface. Expecting to see a friend, I turned to find no one right behind me. Strange. Hand on the limestone, unexpected tears began to flow as I kept walking, making me feel ridiculous and conspicuous, and asking myself “Why am I crying, these are just rocks”.

An answer came, too private to share, in a voice whose accent was not French, but from the land where my return to the faith had begun some years earlier, Ireland, a connection I did not make until much later when reflecting on this strange experience. The voice was clear, clearly from inside my head, and meant for my edification. Hiding my discomposure as best I could, I went rushing back to my tiny room in Saint Sauveur.

Covering my head with a pillow, a painful review of my entire life began like a movie. I attempted to avert confrontation with it. I pulled myself together and joined the other pilgrims for lunch, only to find there was not a seat to be available, nothing saved for me by friends old or new. Compelled to return to my room to finish the reel, I painfully remembered actions that had many ripple effects and negative reverberations to which I had been blind.

I thought I had watered my soul with a deeper love for Jesus but I saw areas from which I blocked Him, so it was still parched. I thought I was so strong in my rediscovered faith only to discover I was just a hatchling, still so weak. I was frightened, afraid of the changes, confessions, and apologies still to happen. So many things came into high-definition – things that were missing, but even more things that needed to go. That “holy way” became clearer, and I knew I must be cleaner to walk on it. It was a piercing experience, but a blessing indeed, and incredible things were seen that day.

An unknown hand, a heavenly voice, a sacred place, a friend’s prayer; when we need it most and least expect it, things both mundane or improbable can raise us, lower us, or drag us sideways and put us in front of Jesus, that place we need to be. This Advent, may we see, feel, and hear the incredible signs, wonders and words that God will be sending our way as we wait in joyful hope for his Son, in this world and the next.

*Reflection by Holy Name Cathedral Parishioner Barbara Ramberg*