In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Rorate Mass takes its name from the introit or opening antiphon of the Votive Mass of Our Lady in Advent, traditionally celebrated at daybreak by candlelight. This year, however, we do not have to celebrate a Votive Mass; rather, we get a proper feast – that of Our Lady of Guadalupe. What a consolation it is, to be able to celebrate a feast so dear to us of the American continent this year in this way. It has been a difficult year; we look for signs of hope; we have been very much in darkness, like the Aztecs had been. But with the appearance of Our Lady at Guadalupe in 1531, a new light dawned on our continent.

Thus the Gradual for this Mass quoted the Song of Songs: “Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun?” Our whole land had truly been enshrouded in the darkness of paganism and the rituals that flowed from it, the most abominable of which was human sacrifice. Thousands upon thousands were offered to demons in that despicable way, and the darkness only grew deeper. The Franciscan, Dominican, and Jesuit missionaries came along with the Conquistadores to introduce the true faith with great zeal, but ultimately had little success. But then the woman clothed with the sun appeared…

Within ten years of her appearance at least 10 million pagans were baptized into the true faith. Mexico became a Catholic land and largely remains so to this day. Most importantly, the human sacrifice stopped cold. Thus the communion antiphon will quote Psalm 147 to proclaim, “Non fecit taliter omni nationi” – “He has not done thus to every nation”; seemingly never before had God worked such an incredible deed – that is, after the Incarnation – than when he sent his Mother to Mexico. Darkness was descending upon Europe, with thousands leaving the Church due to the so-called Reformation; but in the New World, a new light dawned.

Well, we must recognize with great sadness and compunction that the darkness has truly engulfed us again. In the form of abortion, human sacrifice has found its way back into society, and the numbers are far greater than the Aztecs ever dreamed. And beyond that particular very evil element of our present situation, there are so many others we could name. We yearn for a new societal awakening to Christ; we wish his victory of sin and death would manifest itself again in a miraculous way in our land. We do not deserve it; indeed, if we are honest, we are embarrassed even to ask for such graces. But we make bold to ask nonetheless.

Indeed, reflecting upon the gospel of the Visitation, we beg our Mother to come and visit us anew. From our perspective, there is no human remedy at this point. Only God can save us. His mother can usher that salvation in, as she did in other crucial moments in history. Think of the victory of Lepanto, or that of Vienna; she is venerated as a savior of the City of Rome; many other places revere her powerful help. But think, above all, of the Incarnation and the birth of Christ, the commemoration of which we are preparing for during this time. Her “yes” to God opened the way to every blessing and a sure and certain hope for all God’s children.

I am firmly convinced that our way forward through this time is the way of Marian devotion. If you do not pray her rosary every day, start doing it. If you do not pray the rosary as a family, find a way to do so. If you find the rosary easy to pray, include a special intention for those who find it hard. If you find it difficult, ask Our Lady to help you, and recognize that she is pleased with your efforts in spite of any challenges. The only way out of our situation is to go through it. But with her company – with her powerful help – it is far easier, and she reflects the radiant hope of Christ, which the darkness shall never fully overcome.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.