

6<sup>th</sup> February 2022

## Comeuppance

**“And now it came at last: George Amberson Minafer had got his comeuppance. He'd got it three times filled and running over.”**

*Orson Welles, From the script of ‘The Magnificent Ambersons’*

We all rightly celebrate Leonardo da Vinci, the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Italian, as one of the greatest artists of all time. We also know him as a scientist, explorer of the universe, architect, inventor, and student of nature. He never went anywhere without a notebook in his pocket to record his observations, questions and thoughts.

But, being a polymath, it's not surprising that Leonardo da Vinci was also a writer. His “fragments” of thoughts, aphorisms, fantastic descriptions, pleasantries and spiritual ideas run to over seven thousand pages. There was a lot of writing in his notebooks too, including this fable:

*A priest was going through his parish one Holy Day sprinkling the houses with holy water, as was the custom. He came to the home of an artist, and, as he sprinkled the water around the house, some fell on the paintings. This annoyed the artist, who asked the priest why on earth he saw fit to throw water on the artwork. The priest replied: “It is the custom. It is my duty to do so, and I am doing the right thing. For he that does the right thing can expect good and better things in return. That is what God has promised. Every good deed one does on earth will bring reward a hundredfold from above.” The artist, waiting till the priest had gone, went to the window above and throw a large bucket of water over the priest. “Here is the hundredfold reward coming to you from above,” he shouted, “just as you said would happen on account of the good deed you've just done for me with your holy water – and managed to ruin half my painting.”*

Shall I paint a picture for you of lessons to be drawn from such a tale? No, I won't, other than to see in it a warning against arrogance, facile explanations, and always being right. Let's take note of a warning to look out for the possibilities of comeuppance – from above or anywhere else!

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, if I can sprinkle some holiness around today, let me do so.*

*But let me offer my love without expectation of reward.*

*Let me offer my compassion without expectation of benefit.*

*Let me be aware of the damage I might cause without thinking.*

*Let me be aware of the irritation I might cause without listening.*

*Let me be open to learning lessons and to taking criticism.*

*Let me be open to correction and being able to change.*

*Let me, at all times, be attuned to your way and your will. Amen*