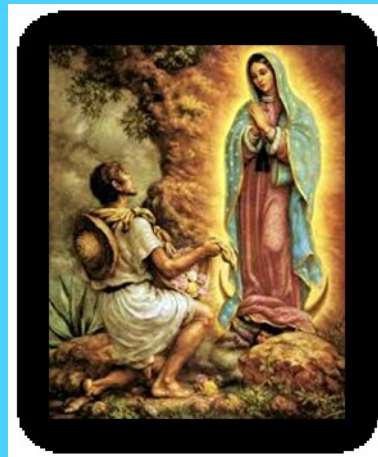


Dear Friends in Christ,

This week I invite you all to celebrate with us the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We all know how important the cause of protecting and promoting of life is, and we all have to do our share to be part of it and to have our voice heard.

An elder Mexican man makes his way to Mass in the early morning twilight of December 9, 1531. The morning quiet is broken by a strange music that he will later describe as the beautiful sound of birds. Diverting his path to investigate the sound, Juan Diego comes face to face with a radiant apparition of the Virgin Mary. Juan Diego is 57 years old. He has just encountered the Virgin Mary on Tepeyac Hill, the site of a former Aztec Temple. Our Lady calms the startled traveler, and assures him of who she is. She instructs Juan Diego to visit his bishop and ask that a temple be built on the site of her appearance, so that she will have a place to hear petitions and to heal the suffering of the Mexican people. "Now go and put forth your best effort," Our Lady instructs.

Later, at their second meeting, the Bishop asks for a sign. Juan Diego makes a promise he won't keep, saying he will return the very next morning with a sign from Our Lady. But that evening, Juan Diego returns home to find his uncle, Juan Bernadino, who is 68 years old, and suddenly, terribly ill. Juan Diego cannot leave his uncle's bedside to keep his pledge to the Bishop. He spends two days with his uncle, trying to save him. When it becomes apparent his uncle is about to die, he leaves to find a priest who can prepare him for death. On the road, in his way, Our Lady appears for a third time. Upset and afraid, Juan explains himself. Our Lady replies, "Am I not your mother? ... Are you not in the crossing of my arms?" she asks. Shamed by the admonishment, but emboldened by Our Lady's presence, Juan Diego asks for the sign he promised to the Bishop. Juan Diego is instructed to climb to the top of Tepeyac Hill where he will find flowers. He is to pick the flowers there, which are unlike any he has seen before, and he is to keep them hidden in his tilma until he reaches the Bishop. He obeys and atop the hill he finds a great number of flowering roses which he picks and hastily gathers into his cloak. For the third time, Juan Diego is ushered in to see the Bishop. The skeptical cleric has waited for two days to see what sign Our Lady has for him. Juan opens his tilma, letting the roses cascade to the floor. But more than the roses, both men are astonished to see what is painted on his humble tilma - an exquisite image of Our Lady. At the same time Our Lady is appearing to Juan Diego, and directing him to cut the flowers on Tepeyac Hill, she also appears to his uncle, Juan Bernadino who believes he is about to die. As soon as she appears, the fever stops and Juan Bernadino feels well again. She tells Juan Bernadino, she wants to be known as "Santa Maria, de Guadalupe."



Our Lady of Guadalupe did not appear again, for her mission was complete. The temple was built and remains there today, in what is now a suburb of Mexico City. Millions of natives will convert at the news of what has happened. Millions more will make pilgrimages over the next five centuries to see the miraculous tilma, and to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe. Great miracles continue to occur, even today. On October 12, 1945, Pope Pius XII, decreed Our Lady of Guadalupe to be "Patroness of all the Americas." Her feast day is December 12, and it is a Holy Day of Obligation in Mexico.

Our Lady of Guadalupe had this to say to Juan Diego:

"Know for certain, least of my sons, that I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary, Mother of the True God through whom everything lives, the Lord of all things near and far, the Master of heaven and earth. It is my earnest wish that a temple be built here to my honor. Here I will demonstrate, I will exhibit, I will give all my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to the people. I am your merciful mother, the merciful mother of all of you who live united in this land, and of all mankind, of all those who love me, of those who cry to me, of those who seek me, of those who have confidence in me. Here I will hear their weeping, their sorrow, and will remedy and alleviate all their multiple sufferings, necessities and misfortunes."

**OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, PROTECTRESS OF THE UNBORN AND
PATRONESS OF BOTH AMERICAS,
PRAY FOR US!**

You are invited to join our Brother Knights who are having a special and a very solemn occasion in honor Our Lady of Guadalupe. Following Mass on **Monday, December 16th**, there will be the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until Tuesday, December 17th. The Silver Rose Rosary prayer (Living Rosary) and evening Mass will follow at 6:00 pm.

In Christ,

