

Our Lady of Guadalupe **December 12**

(Read the Opening Prayer and Scripture out loud.)

Opening Prayer

Blessed Mary of Guadalupe: On the Hill of Calvary, Christ said, "Behold your Mother." Fourteen centuries later, on Tepeyac Hill, you told Blessed Juan Diego, "I am your Mother, Mother of the God through whom everything lives." Unlike other apparitions before or since, you presented Juan Diego with your picture as proof of your presence. Now we ask for your help, confident in your promise that you will help us bring Christ to others and most importantly, to inspire young men and women to enter into service to His Church as priests, sisters and brothers. Amen.

Scripture

"A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." (*Revelation 12:1*)

(Take time for silent reflection, then read the Introduction out loud.)

Introduction

The full life-giving meaning of Our Lady of Guadalupe, commonly referred to as Mary of the Americas, can be seen and understood only in the overall context of the confused and painful reality of the post conquest period of this hemisphere. This program will guide us to see that just as the Savior of the world entered the world through the birth of a powerless and defenseless baby, so would the beginning of the new creation of humanity in the Americas be realized through the simple and powerless Juan Diego.

(Introduce a speaker or the facilitator can read the following paragraphs with pauses in between.)

Documentary Tradition

The history of Mary's mystical appearances around the world and during different times of history reveals an experience that is not culturally or historically bound. She has left her mark around the world as the mother of all humanity, all races and nations.

"By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Thus she is a "preeminent and . . . wholly unique member of the Church"; indeed, she is the "exemplary realization" (typus) of the Church." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 967*).

"Her role in relation to the Church and to all humanity goes still further. "In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the Savior's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 968*).

Mary's messages bear witness to another world than this earthly globe. In 1531, on Mount Tepeyac, located on the outskirts of Mexico City, she appeared to an Indian named Juan Diego with a message to build a church on the site to be given to the Bishop of Mexico. The timeless message is that the

mother of Christ wants all her children to be saved. She brought hope and inspired ultimate triumph of the humble and the grieving peoples of that place.

(The facilitator can read the Discussion Questions out loud for general or small group discussion.)

Discussion Questions

1. God reveals Himself when we least expect it. Often times it is in the seemingly small and insignificant events of work and family life. Relate times when God has revealed His presence to you.
2. How does fear hold us back from a change of heart that can lead to our own conversion and the healing of our friends, families, and colleagues?
3. What does the message of Our Lady of Guadalupe have to offer Serrans?

Closing Reflection

“Through this lowly peasant, the poorest of the poor, God demonstrated that everyone, regardless of his or her station in life, can respond to the divine call to action, and if necessary, under the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit, achieve results that are truly monumental.” *Francis Johnston, The Wonders of Guadalupe, 1981.*

“Don’t fear anything. Am I not here, your mother? Are you not in the foldings of my arms? Have I not placed you on my lap?” *Our Lady of Guadalupe to Blessed Juan Diego, Dec. 12, 1531.*

N.B. Many Marian experts consider Mary’s appearance at Guadalupe the greatest apparition. Its effect — the conversion of an entire nation — is undisputed. The gift of her image on Juan Diego’s tilma is also unprecedented. Nineteen books about the history, theology and spirituality of Our Lady of Guadalupe are listed in the back of the book “Mary of the Americas: Our Lady of Guadalupe,” (1989, Alba House Society of St. Paul, 2187 Victory Blvd., Staten Island, NY 10314) by Capuchin Franciscan Father Christopher Rengers. The list includes four books for children.

Bibliography

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Varghese, Abraham. *God Sent: A Story of the Accredited Apparitions of Mary*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000.