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## Our Lady of Guadalupe



***Empress of the Americas  
Protectress of the Unborn  
Patroness of the New Evangelization***



St. Juan Diego

# Our Lady of Guadalupe

## “Empress of the Americas”

In the year 1521, Tenochtitlan, the capital city of the Aztec empire, which is now Mexico City, fell

to Spanish forces. Ten years later 9 million inhabitants of this land, who had for centuries professed a polytheistic and human-sacrificing religion, were suddenly converted to Christianity. What was it that happened in those times that produced such an incredible and historically unprecedented conversion?

The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to a poor and humble Indian at Tepeyac, a hill northwest of Mexico City. She identified herself as the Mother of the True God, Santa Maria of Guadalupe or Te-coa-tla-xope, (pronounced phonetically “te-quat-la-shupe) which in the Aztec tongue means “the one who crushes the head of the serpent”. Undoubtedly she came to crush the serpent, as it is written in the Book of Genesis, 3:15 “...she shall crush thy head...”, by putting an end to these barbaric human sacrifices, and literally converting millions of natives to Christianity.

### Background and Setting of these Historical Events

The Aztecs ruled most of Central America. The two chief gods of the Aztec pantheon were Huitzilopochtli, the Hummingbird Wizard or “god of thirst”, called the Lover of Hearts and Drinker of Blood; and Tezcatlipoca, the Smoking Mirror Lord of the Dark, called “He Who is at the Shoulder as the Tempter”. The Aztecs believed that the gods required human blood in order to subsist and in order to appease these frightful deities their priests sacrificed at least 50,000 men, women, and children annually by cutting out their beating hearts. Years of practice had given them a skill and speed that enabled them to perform this gruesome task on each victim in less than 15 seconds! The early Mexican historian, Ixtlilxochitl, estimated that one out of every five children in Mexico was sacrificed. The climax of these ritual killings came in 1487 for the dedication of the new, and richly decorated temple of Huitzilopochtli in the center of Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City), and enclosed by the richly decorated Coatepantli, the Serpant Wall. In a single ceremony that lasted for four days and four nights, with the constant beating of giant drums made of snakeskin, the Aztec ruler and demon worshiper Tlaacaellel presided over the sacrifice of more than 80,000 men. (For more information on the Aztec worship, please see Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Conquest of Darkness, by Dr. Warren Carroll.)

Montezuma, or Moctezuma, as some called him, was ruler of the Aztec Nation, chief priest and head of their army. His sister, Princess Papantzin, had a dream that deeply troubled the King. In her dream she saw a luminous being with a black cross on his forehead who led her to a shore with large ships. These ships would soon come to their own shores and conquer the Aztecs bringing with them the Faith in the One True God. Ten years later, on Good Friday, April 22nd, 1519, the Spanish Conquistadors arrived on the Gulf shore of Mexico led by Hernando Cortez. They named the landing place Veracruz or “The True Cross”. Their Chaplain, Father Bartolome de Olmedo, performed the first Mass there on Easter Sunday.

Within two years, with a small army of a few hundred soldiers, under the twofold protection of the Cross of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary,

who’s image Cortez had carried over with him on his voyage from Spain, and through a series of miraculous victories, the Aztecs were defeated and the practice of human sacrifice was finally brought to an end.

Cortez’s first action as commander was to place the region under the Spanish crown and to demolish the temples of sacrifice, building in their place Catholic churches, such as the Church Santiago (or St. James) de Tlatelolco on the site of the Temple of the sun god in present-day Mexico City.

Unfortunately, the Conquistadors were not all “saints”. Much like the Crusaders, they were in search of God, fortune, and personal glory, but oftentimes it was more the fortune and personal glory that became their goal. The Native Americans were treated very unjustly and suf-

fered much abuse at the hands of their Spanish conquerors. With the hostility that was shown to these people by the new colonial government, they distrusted the Spanish and this caused them to be wary of converting to Christianity, impelling the newly appointed bishop-elect Juan de

Zumarraga of Mexico to write to the king of Spain, telling him that unless there was a miracle, the continent would be lost. Between December 9 and December 12, 1531, that miracle happened, and it changed the future of the continent forever...



The miraculous image of Our Lady

He walked barefoot and on chilly mornings he would wear a tilma, or ayate which was a course cloth-like mantle woven from the fibres of the maquey cactus. Although Mexico is a hot country, the plateau of Mexico City is about 7000 feet above sea level and the nights and early morning hours can be very cool. It was on one of these mornings, December 9th, 1531, that Juan Diego was making his way to the early Mass. As he reached the base of the hill known as Tepeyac, he suddenly heard sweet music, like “birds singing in a chorus”. This surprised him, so he stopped. The singing seemed to be coming from atop the hill from which he could see a white shining cloud surrounded by a rainbow. He was not at all afraid; rather he felt enraptured and his heart was filled with an unexplainable joy.

### The Apparition

There before him stood a beautiful girl with a tan complexion, bathed in the golden beams of the sun. He approached her, and before she herself had revealed to him her identity, Juan Diego had no doubt that he was in the presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of Heaven. She called to him by name in Nahuatl, his own native tongue: “**Juanito, Juan Dieguito!**” He was not frightened in the least; instead he felt overjoyed! He bowed before Her and she spoke to him with a sweet tenderness:

“**Juanito, my son whom I love tenderly like a little and delicate child, where are you going?**”

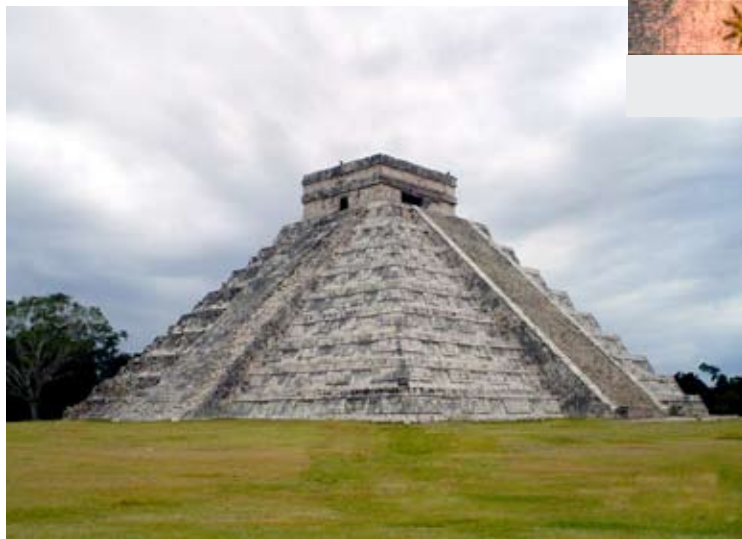
He replied to her: “My Noble Lady and Child, I have to reach the church in Tlatilolco, to pursue things divine, taught and given to us by our priests, delegates of Our Lord.”

Again, she spoke: “**Know and understand well, you, the most humble of My sons, that I am the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the True God, for whom we live, of the Creator of all things, Lord of heaven and earth. I wish that a temple be erected here quickly, so I may therein exhibit and give all My love, compassion, help, and protection, because I am your merciful mother, to you and to all the inhabitants on this land and all the rest who love Me, invoke and confide in Me, to listen there to their lamentations, and remedy all their miseries, afflictions and sorrows. And to accomplish what My clemency pretends, go to the palace of the Bishop of Mexico, and you will say to him that I manifest My great desire, that here on this plain, a temple be built to Me. You will accurately relate all you have seen and admired, and what you have heard. Be assured that I will be most grateful and will reward you, because I will make you happy and worthy of recompense for the effort and fatigue in what you will obtain for what I have entrusted. Behold, you have heard My mandate, My humble son; go and put forth all your effort.**”

To this Juan Diego said to her: “My Lady, I am going to comply with Your mandate; now I must part from You, I, your humble servant.” He then descended the hill and made his way along the road which runs directly into Mexico City in order to comply to her request.

### The visit to the Bishop

Upon entering the city, Juan Diego went directly to the Bishop’s palace to meet with Bishop Juan de Zumarraga, a Franciscan of great piety who had a great love for the Virgin Mary. Juan related to him all that he had seen and heard. The Bishop was cordial



A temple in Mexico that was used to worship the “sun-god”

Each morning he departed early in order to be on time for the Mass and to receive religious-instruc-

### St. Juan Diego and the “Lady from Heaven”

St. Juan Diego was born in 1474 in Cuautliltán, which, today, is part of Mexico City. He was given the name “Cuauhtlatatzin” or “talking eagle” and was a gifted member of the Chichimeca people. He worked hard in the fields and in the manufacturing of mats. He owned a small house on a tiny piece of land and was happily married, but had no children. Between 1524 and 1525, he and his wife converted to Christianity and were given the names, Juan Diego and Maria Lucia in Baptism. They were both very devout and attended daily Mass despite a distance of 12 miles to the mission church. In May of 1529 Juan’s wife became ill and died. He then went to live with his uncle Juan Bernardino, who was also a convert to Christianity, in Tolpetlac, which was still 4 miles from the church of St. James in Tlatelolco-Tenochtitlan.

Each morning he departed early in order to be on time for the Mass and to receive religious-instruc-

but hesitant on this first visit and said that he would consider the requests of the Lady and politely invited Juan Diego to come visit again.

Dismayed, Juan returned to the hill and found Mary waiting for him. He said to her: "Lady, I went where You sent me to comply with Your command. With difficulty I entered the prelate's study. I saw him and exposed Your message, just as You had instructed me. He received me benevolently and listened attentively, but when he replied, it appeared that he did not believe me. I perfectly understood by the manner in which he replied that he believes it to be an invention of mine – that You wish that a temple be built here to You, and that it is not Your order. Now I exceedingly beg, Lady, that You entrust the delivery of Your message to someone of importance, well known, respected, and esteemed, so that they may believe in him; because I am a nobody, I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf, and You, my Lady, You send me to a place where I never visit nor repose. Please excuse my great unpleasantness, and let not fretfulness befall, my Lady and my All."

The Blessed Virgin answered: "Hark, My son the least, you must understand that I have many servants and messengers, to whom I must entrust the delivery of My message and carry My wish, but it is of precise detail that You yourself solicit and assist, and that through your mediation My wish be complied. I earnestly implore, My son the least, and with sternness I command, that you again go tomorrow and see the Bishop. You go in My name, and make known My wish in its entirety – that he has to start the erection of a temple which I ask of him. And again tell him that I, in person, the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of God, sent you."

Juan Diego replied: "Lady, let me not cause You affliction. Gladly and willingly I will go to comply with Your mandate. Under no condition will I fail to do it, for the way is not even distressing. I will go to do Your wish, but perhaps I will not be heard with liking, or if I am heard, I might not be believed. Tomorrow afternoon, at sunset, I will come to bring You the result of Your message with the prelate's reply." Juan Diego then left Her and returned to his home.

### The Bishop asks for a sign

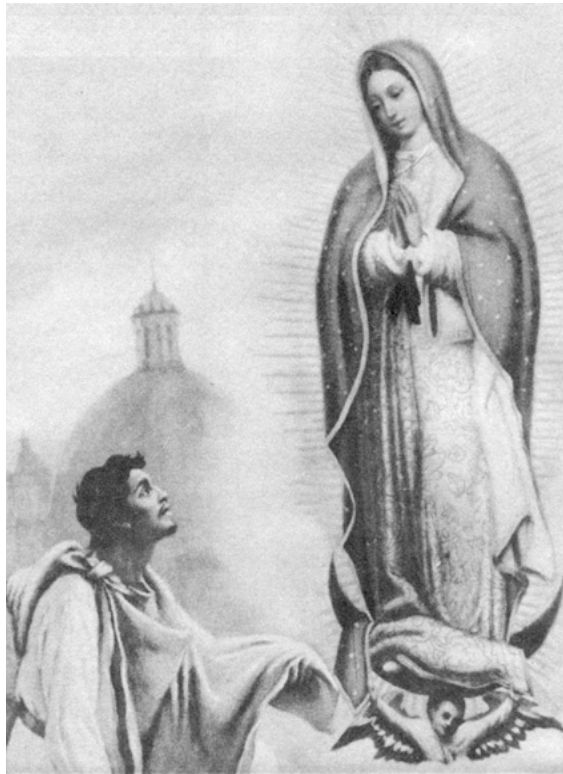
The next day was Sunday and after hearing Mass Juan Diego returned to the palace of the Bishop. Kneeling before him, he dissolved into tears and once again conveyed to him the Blessed Lady's message and the wish of the Immaculate, to erect Her temple where She willed it to be. Bishop Zumarraga asked Juan many questions, and even though he replied to each question patiently and precisely, describing to him in perfect detail all that he had seen, the Bishop still did not give credence to his story. Finally the Bishop said to him that if the Lady would give a "sign" that would prove to him that she was truly from Heaven, then he would believe and he would grant Her request.

Juan Diego then returned to the Blessed Virgin, and related to Her the Bishop's answer. Smiling, she said to him: "Well and good, My little dear. You will return here tomorrow so you can take to the Bishop the sign he has requested. With this he will believe you, and in this regard he will not doubt you, nor will he be suspicious of you. And know, My little dear, that I will reward your solicitude and effort and fatigue spent on My behalf. Lo! Go now. I will await you here tomorrow."

### The "sign"

The following day was December 12th. Juan Diego was unable to return to the Tepeyac hilltop because his uncle Juan Bernardino had become gravely ill. Juan summoned a doctor, but by nightfall his uncle requested that he go instead to Tlatilolco early the following morn-

ing to summon a priest to hear his confession. Before dawn, Juan Diego set out for Tlatilolco and as he approached the road which joins the slope to the Tepeyac hilltop, he decided to make a small detour. He was ashamed for not having kept his promise to return to the Lady and he wished to avoid having to meet with her again. But, as he came around to the other side of the hill, there She stood as though She were waiting for him. She said to him: "What's there, My son the least? Where are you going?" He bowed before Her, saying: "Lady, I am going to cause You grief. Know that a servant of Yours is very sick, my uncle. He has contracted the plague, and is near death. I am hurrying to Your house in Mexico to call one of Your priests, beloved by Our Lord, to hear his confession and absolve him, because, since we were born, we were taught to prepare for death. But if I go, I shall return here soon, so I may go to deliver Your message. Lady, forgive me, be patient with me for the time being. I will not deceive You. Tomorrow I will come in all haste."



Our Lady appears to Juan Diego

After hearing this the Most Holy Virgin answered: "Hear Me and understand well, My son the least, that nothing should frighten nor grieve you. Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who am your Mother? Are you not under My protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within My fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything. Do not be afflicted by the illness of your uncle, who will not die now from it. Be assured that he is now cured."

Juan Diego's uncle Juan Bernardino was in fact cured of his disease at that very moment. Our Lady told Juan Bernardino that she wished to be known under the title, "Santa Maria Te-coa-tla-xope". In the Aztec language "Coa" meaning serpent, "tla" being the noun ending which can be interpreted as "the", while "xopeuh" means to crush or stamp out. He later told this word to the Spaniards, who heard it as "de Guadalupe", a devotion to the Blessed Mother in Extremadura, Spain that the Spanish were very familiar with. (see p.5) (This is how the image was named Guadalupe, a title which it has kept for over four centuries.) But in reality it would seem that Our Lady must have called Herself "Santa Maria who crushes the serpent."



The cure of Juan Bernardino



Roses spilling from the tilma of St. Juan Diego

When Juan Diego was told that his uncle was cured, he was greatly consoled and begged the Lady from Heaven to excuse him so that he could now go directly to the Bishop in order to bring him Her "sign" that he too could now believe. The Lady from Heaven ordered him: "Climb, My son the least, to the top of the hill where you saw Me and I gave you orders. You will find different flowers. Cut them, gather them, assemble them, and then come and bring them before My presence."

Immediately, Juan Diego climbed the hill and to his amazement found many different varieties of exquisite Castilian roses blooming there. The hilltop was no place for any kind of flowers to grow. It had many crags, thistles, thorns, and mesquites. Occasionally weeds would grow, but... this was December, a time when roses or most any vegetation would ordinarily freeze! These roses were very fragrant and they were covered with dewdrops which resembled precious pearls. Immediately he began to cut them, placing them inside his tilma. Coming down the hill he presented them to the Lady from Heaven who took them, and with Her own hands rearranged them inside his tilma, saying: "My son the least, this diversity of roses is the proof and the sign which you will take to the Bishop. You will tell him in My name that he will see in them My wish,

and that he will have to comply to it. You are My ambassador, most worthy of all confidence! Rigorously, I command you that only before the presence of the Bishop will you unfold your mantle and disclose what you are carrying. You will relate all and well; you will tell that I ordered you to climb to the hilltop, to go and cut flowers, and all that you saw and admired, so you can induce the prelate to give his support, with the aim that a temple be built and erected as I have asked."

When Juan Diego took leave of Our Lady, he felt happy that with a gift such as this, he was sure of success. It was with great care that he held onto the precious flowers which he bore in his tilma, and enjoyed their beautiful fragrance as he hurried along the road eager to present the Bishop with the "sign."

### The miraculous image

Juan Diego reached the Bishop's palace, and once again waited a long time before finally being admitted to see him. Upon entering he knelt before Bishop Zumarraga and told him that he had brought with him the "sign" from the Lady – roses picked high on the hilltop of Tepeyac. He then unfolded his mantle and all the different varieties of roses scattered onto the floor. But even more amazing than the beautiful roses was the image that suddenly appeared on the tilma. It was that of the Ever-Virgin, Holy Mary, Mother of God. When the Bishop saw the image, he and all who were present fell to their knees. The Bishop, with sorrowful tears, prayed and begged forgiveness of the Blessed Virgin for not having believed and for his delay in attending to Her wishes and request. When he rose to his feet, he untied the cloth on which appeared the image of the Lady from Heaven from around Juan Diego's neck. He then took it and placed it in his own private chapel where he kept it until the new Church was erected on the grounds that had been designated by the Mother of God.

Juan Diego, after having given his business and property over to his uncle Juan Bernardino, moved into a small room attached to the chapel that housed the sacred image. He deeply loved Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, and by special permission of the Bishop, he received Holy Communion three times a week, which was a highly unusual occurrence for those times. He spent the rest of his life propagating the account of the Apparitions to his countrymen, and died on May 30, 1548, at the age of 74. Today this same image imprinted on the tilma continues to be venerated by the faithful and is viewed by an estimated 10 million pilgrims annually in the present Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, Mexico.

(Adapted from the writings of our founder, Louis Even)

# The Miraculous Picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Here is a text written by Andre Fernando Garcia on the amazing discoveries about the tilma of the Virgin of Guadalupe

1. Ophthalmalgic studies made on the eyes of Mary detected that when the eye is exposed to light, the retina contracts, and when the light is withdrawn, it returns to a dilated state, just as happens with a living eye.

2. The temperature of Juan Diego's tilma, made of a material that comes from fibers of the maguay cactus, maintains a constant temperature of 98.6 degrees, the same as that of a living human body.

3. One of the doctors who analyzed the tilma placed his stethoscope below the black band at Mary's waist and heard rhythmic beats at 115 pulses per minute, the same as that of a baby in the maternal womb.

4. No sign of paint has been discovered on the tilma. From a distance of 3-4 inches from the image, one can see only the maguay cactus fibers of the material: the colors disappear. Scientific studies have not been able to discover the origin of the coloration, nor the way the image was painted. They cannot detect vestiges of brush strokes or any other known painting technique. NASA scientists confirm that the paint material does not belong to any known element on earth.

5. When the material was examined under a laser ray, it was shown that there is no coloration on the front or the back of the cloth, and that the colors hover at a distance of 3/10th of a millimeter (1/100th of an inch) over the cloth, without touching it. The colors actually float above the surface of the tilma. Isn't that amazing?

6. The rough material of the tilma has a lifespan of no more than 20-30 years. Several centuries ago, a replica of the image was painted on an identical piece of maguay cloth, and it disintegrated after several decades. Nonetheless, during the almost 500 years of the miracle, the cloth with the image of Mary remains as strong as it was on the first day. Science cannot explain why the material has not disintegrated.

7. In the year 1791, muriatic acid accidentally spilled on the upper right side of the tilma. During the period of 30 days, without any special treatment, the affected fabric re-constituted itself miraculously.

8. The stars that appear on the Mantle of Mary reflect the exact configuration and positions that could be seen in the sky of Mexico on the day the miracle happened. (See picture below)

On the right side of the Virgin's mantle, the southern constellations are indicated: At the top are four stars that form part of the Orphiuchus constellation. Below it to the left, one finds Libra, and to its right, at what seems an arrow point, is the beginning of Scorpio. In the middle are the constellations of Lupus and to

its left, an end point of Hydra. Further down, one can clearly see the Southern Cross; above it appears the slightly inclined square of the Centaurus constellation.

On the left side of the Virgin's mantle one sees the northern constellations: At her shoulder, a fragment of the stars of the Herdsman constellation; below it and to the left is the Great Bear. To its right is Berenice's Hair; below it, Hunting Dogs, and to its left, the Thuban, which is the brightest star of the Draco constellation. Below the two parallel stars (which still form part of the Big Bear), one finds stars from another pair of constellations: the Auriga and at the bottom, three stars of Taurus.

Thus, in their totality and proper places, the 46 most brilliant stars that can be seen on the horizon of the Valley of Mexico are identified.

9. In the year 1921, a man concealed a high power bomb in a flower arrangement, and placed it at the feet of the tilma. The explosion destroyed everything around it, except for the tilma, which remained intact.

10. Scientists discovered that the eyes of Mary have the three refractive characteristics of a human eye. (See picture at left)

11. In the eyes of Mary (only about 1/3rd inch in size), miniscule human figures were discovered that no artist could have painted. The same scene is repeated in each eye. Using digital technology, the images in the eyes were enlarged many times, revealing that each eye reflected the figure of the Indian Juan Diego opening his tilma in front of Bishop Zumarraga. Do you know the size of this scene? One fourth of a millimeter (1/100th of an inch).

To close, let us look at three surprising facts:

1. In the Indian language, "Guadalupe" means to "crush the head of the serpent." It properly refers to Genesis 3:15: Mary, the conqueror of evil.

2. The image also depicts a detail from Apocalypse 12: "And a great sign appeared in Heaven. A woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet."

3. The Virgin wears a black band at her waist, which symbolizes pregnancy, to indicate that God wanted Jesus to be born in the three Americas, in the heart of each American.

"While I live I will praise the Lord: I will sing praise unto my God while I have any being" (Ps 146:2).

All of these explanations have the single purpose of demonstrating to you that the Virgin will be with you always, whenever you need her, that she will never abandon you, and that you will always be her special son or daughter.

Never forget the words she spoke to Juan Diego: "My little child, the smallest of all, let nothing afflict you. Do you not know that you are in my lap? Am I not here, I, who am your mother?"



Mexico City legalized abortion on April 24, 2007. The same day, after a Mass in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe offered for the unborn children, a very intense light appeared suddenly on the tilma of Juan Diego. At the level of the womb, the light appeared like a shiny halo, in the shape of an embryo. It lasted for one hour and was photographed and filmed; the photos were inspected by engineer Luis Girault and were declared authentic.

# Pope Benedict XVI on Human Life

Homily given by Pope Benedict XVI, Saturday November 27, 2010, during vespers for the first Sunday of Advent in St. Peter's Basilica. In union with the Holy Father this "Vigil for All Nascent Human Life" was observed in parishes, communities, movements, associations and by individuals throughout the world. (Translation produced by the Vatican Radio)

Dear brothers and sisters, our coming together this evening to begin the Advent journey is enriched by another important reason: with the entire Church, we want to solemnly celebrate a prayer vigil for unborn life. I wish to express my thanks to all who have taken up this invitation and those who are specifically dedicated to welcoming and safeguarding human life in different situations of fragility, especially in its early days and in its early stages.

The beginning of the liturgical year helps us to relive the expectation of God made flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, God who makes himself small, He becomes a child, it speaks to us of the coming of a God who is near, who wanted to experience the life of man, from the very beginning, to save it completely, fully. And so the mystery of the Incarnation of the Lord and the beginning of human life are intimately connected and in harmony with each other within the one saving plan of God, the Lord of life of each and every one of us. The Incarnation reveals to us, with intense light and in an amazing way, that every human life has an incomparable, a most elevated dignity.

Man has an unmistakable originality compared to all other living beings that inhabit the earth. He presents himself as a unique and singular entity, endowed with intelligence and free will, as well as being composed of a material reality. He lives simultaneously and inseparably in the spiritual dimension and the corporal dimension. This is also suggested in the text of the First letter to the Thessalonians which was just proclaimed: "May the God of peace himself – St. Paul writes – make you perfectly holy



Pope Benedict XVI gives his homily

and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:23).

Therefore, we are spirit, soul and body. We are part of this world, tied to the possibilities and limits of our material condition, at the same time we are open to an infinite horizon, able to converse with God and to welcome Him in us. We operate in earthly realities and through them we can perceive the presence of God and seek Him, truth, goodness and absolute beauty. We savour fragments of life and happiness and we long for total fulfilment.

God loves us so deeply, totally, without distinction, He calls us to friendship with him, He makes us part of a reality beyond all imagination, thought and word; His own divine life. With emotion and gratitude we acknowledge the value of the incomparable dignity of every human person and the great responsibility we have toward all. "Christ, the final Adam, – says the Second Vatican Council – by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear... by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man." (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22).

Believing in Jesus Christ also means having a new outlook on man, a look of trust and hope. Moreover, experience itself and reason show that the human being is a subject capable of discernment, self-conscious and free, unique and irreplaceable, the summit of all earthly things, that must be recognized in his innate value and always accepted with respect and love. He has the right not to be treated as an object of possession or something to manipulate at will, not to be reduced to a mere instrument for the benefit of others and their interests. The human person is a good in and of himself and his integral development should always be sought. Love for all, if it is sincere, naturally tends to become a preferential attention to the weakest and poorest. In this vein we find the Church's concern for the unborn, the most fragile, the most threatened by the selfishness of adults and the darkening of consciences. The Church continually reiterates what was declared by the Second Vatican Council against abortion and all violations of unborn life: "from the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care" (*ibid.*, n. 51).

There are cultural tendencies that seek to anesthetize consciences with misleading motivations. With regard to the embryo in the womb, science itself highlights its autonomy capable of interaction with the mother, the coordination of biological pro-

(continued on page 6)

J.M.J.

## The Virgin of Guadalupe Patroness of Extremadura in Spain

There is a beautiful sanctuary in Spain that is home to the image of the Mother of God under the title of *The Virgin of Guadalupe*. In the Moorish language the word Guadalupe means "river of light, river of love" and is the name of the river next to which the miraculous statue was discovered.

Tradition relates that the statue was carved by St. Luke the evangelist in the early years of the Church. It later came into the possession of Pope St. Gregory the Great who in turn gave it as a gift to the archbishop of Seville, St. Leander. When Seville was taken by the Moors in the year 711, the statue was buried in a cave in the hills of Extremadura, Spain near the Guadalupe River to hide it from the enemy. It was rediscovered in the year 1326 by a humble cow herder Gil Cordero who had gone into the hills in search of one of his cows. Gil relates that "suddenly the Virgin Mary appeared and instructed me to go to the local priest and to the people, and tell them that it was her wish that they should come and remove the stones that obstructed the cave, dig inside the cave and there they would find an image. She wanted a chapel erected on this spot, and in time she would make of the shrine a center of her heavenly power and protection." Gil did as The Blessed Mother had asked and in the cave they found a perfectly preserved statue along with documents that gave the date of the statue's concealment which was more than six hundred years before.



Queen Isabella and Christopher Columbus

A sanctuary to the Virgin was built on the site of the vision and later a monastery was also built. It was to this shrine that Queen Isabella came to pray to the Virgin of Guadalupe in 1492 for guidance on whether to finance the expedition of Christopher Columbus, and it was in the monastery that she and King Ferdinand of Spain signed the documents that authorized Columbus' voyage to the New World. Christopher Columbus also came to this sanctuary to pray to the Virgin of Guadalupe asking for her special protection for him and his men on their journey and he renamed his mother-ship the "Santa Maria" in honor of *The Virgin of Guadalupe*. Upon his return to Spain, Columbus brought with him some Native American's who were baptized into the Faith at the spring of the sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe. These were the first converts to Christianity from the New World.

It would be of interest to also note here the names of his (Christopher Columbus') three ships; the "Pinta," the "Nina," and the "Santa Maria." The Spanish word "Pinta" is a derivative of the verb "pintar" meaning to "paint," "Nina" means "young girl," and "Santa Maria" is "Holy Mary." To put these three words together we can literally say that: He (God) paints the young girl, Holy Mary. These were the three ships that Columbus and his men sailed when they came to discover the New World, and it seems to prefigure the apparition of Our Lady to Juan Diego in 1531 on the hills of Tepeyac, outside of Mexico City where she left her image "painted" on his tilma.



The Virgin of Guadalupe

# Pope Benedict XVI on Human Life

(continued from page 5)

cesses, the continuity of development, the growing complexity of the organism. This is not an accumulation of biological material, but a new living being, dynamic and wonderfully ordered, a new unique human being. So was Jesus in Mary's womb, so it was for all of us in our mother's womb. With the ancient Christian writer Tertullian we can say: "he who will be a man is already one" (*Apologeticum IX, 8*), there is no reason not to consider him a person from conception.

Unfortunately, even after birth, the lives of children continue to be exposed to abandonment, hunger, poverty, disease, abuse, violence or exploitation. The many violations of their rights that are committed in the world sorely hurt the conscience of every man of good will. Before the sad landscape of the injustices committed against human life, before and after birth, I make mine Pope John Paul II's passionate appeal to the responsibility of each and every individual: "respect, protect, love and serve life, every human life! Only in this direction will you find justice, development, true freedom, peace and happiness!" (*Encyclical Evangelium vitae, 5*). I urge the protagonists of politics, economic and social communications to do everything in their power to promote a culture which respects human life, to provide favorable conditions and support networks for the reception and development of life.

To the Virgin Mary, who welcomed the Son of God made man with faith, with her maternal womb, with loving care, with nurturing support and vibrant with love, we entrust our commitment and prayer in favour of unborn life. We do in the liturgy – which is the place where we live the truth and where truth

lives with us – worshipping the divine Eucharist, we contemplate Christ's body, that body who took flesh from Mary by the Holy Spirit, and from her was born in Bethlehem for our salvation. *Ave, verum Corpus, natum de Maria Virgine!*

**Pope Benedict XVI**



## Prayer for life written by Pope Benedict XVI:

Lord Jesus, You who faithfully visit and fulfill with your Presence the Church and the history of men; You who in the miraculous Sacrament of your Body and Blood render us participants in divine Life and allow us a foretaste of the joy of eternal Life; We adore and bless you.

Prostrated before You, source and lover of Life,

truly present and alive among us, we beg you, re-awaken in us respect for every unborn life, make us capable of seeing in the fruit of the maternal womb the miraculous work of the Creator, open our hearts to generously welcoming every child that comes into life.

Bless all families, sanctify the union of spouses, render fruitful their love.

Accompany the choices of legislative assemblies with the light of your Spirit, so that peoples and nations may recognize and respect the sacred nature of life, of every human life.

Guide the work of scientists and doctors, so that all progress contributes to the integral well-being of the person, and no-one endures suppression or injustice.

Give creative charity to administrators and economists, so they may realize and promote sufficient conditions so that young families can serenely embrace the birth of new children

Console the married couples who suffer because they are unable to have children and in Your goodness provide for them.

Teach us all to care for orphaned or abandoned children, so they may experience the warmth of your Charity, the consolation of your divine Heart.

Together with Mary, Your Mother, the great believer, in whose womb you took on our human nature, we wait to receive from You, our Only True Good and Saviour, the strength to love and serve life, in anticipation of living forever in You, in communion with the Blessed Trinity. Amen.

## Order the new extended version today!

# Struck by Lightning

## Death, judgement and conversion

### The testimony of Gloria Polo

On May 5th, 1995, something extraordinary happened to Dr. Gloria Polo Ortiz, a dentist from Bogota, Colombia. She was taking shelter from a storm with her nephew, when both of them were struck by lightning. What happened to her afterwards was a miracle which led to her conversion and a life of abandonment to the Will of God. She gives her testimony in many countries of the world and now we have the opportunity to read her entire testimony. She has recently traveled to the United States and Canada and many church authorities have blessed and encouraged the propagation of her testimony. Here are some extracts from the book:

"Brothers and sisters! It's beautiful for me to be with you sharing this precious gift my Lord gave me more than ten years ago. I was attending graduate school, along with my nephew, who was also a dentist. My husband was with us that day. It was raining very hard, and my nephew and I were sharing a small umbrella. My husband was wearing his raincoat and he approached the outside wall of the General Library. Meanwhile, my nephew and I approached the trees without noticing, while skipping puddles. As we were about to skip to avoid a huge puddle, we were struck by lightning..."

"We were charred. My nephew died there. He was a young man who, despite his young age, had given himself over to the Lord and was very devout to the Infant Jesus. He always carried the Infant Jesus' image inside a quartz crystal next to his chest. According to the coroner, lightning entered him through the image, ran through his heart, burned him on the inside and exited through his foot. But on the outside, he was not charred nor burnt.

"In my case, instead, lightning came in (this way) and burned my body in a horrifying way, on the inside and outside. This body you see here, this reconstructed body, is through the mercy of our Lord. Lightning charred me, left me without breasts, practically made my whole flesh and ribs vanish. My stomach, my legs; lightning went out my right foot. My liver was charred, my kidneys were burned, just like my lungs.

"The most beautiful part is that, while my flesh was charred, at that instant I found myself inside a beautiful white tunnel full of joy and peace, a happiness for which there are no human words that can describe the grandeur of the moment. The climax of the moment was immense. I was happy and joyful; nothing weighed me down inside that tunnel. I felt the source of all that love, all that peace.

"As I was going up, I realized I had died. At that instant I thought about my kids and I said "Oh, my God, my kids! What will they say? This very busy mom never had time for them!" That's when I saw my life truthfully and I became sad.

"Then, I started descending slowly to find my body, where I found myself lifeless. My body was on a gurney at the medical center on campus. I saw how the doctors gave me electric shocks to pull me out of cardiac arrest..."

"My flesh hurt, it was burned. It hurt a lot. Smoke and vapor came out of it. And the most horrible pain was that of my vanity. I was a woman of the world, an executive woman; an intellectual, a student, enslaved by my body, beauty, and fashion.

"From there, we were transported to a hospital, where they quickly moved me to the operating room and began scraping all my burned tissue. All of a sudden, I went through a moment of horror. I had been a 'dieting Catholic' all my life..."

"I started descending and light became scarce and I started roaming some tunnels in pitch darkness. That darkness has no comparison. The darkest darkness on earth is like noontime sunlight compared to it. That darkness causes pain, horror, and shame... The most horrifying thing about that hole was that not even a bit of God's love was felt in it, not a drop of hope..."

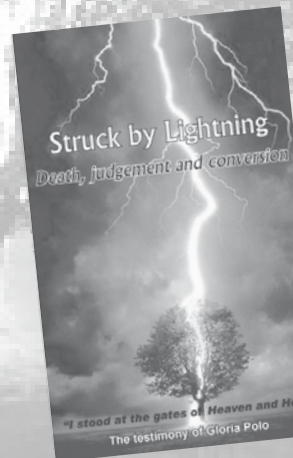
Dr. Polo has the written approval of her diocese in Bogota, Colombia and her spiritual director. Her testimony is an inspiration for all of us, and will increase our faith in Christ Jesus and His Holy Catholic Church. (104 pages, format B5.)

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# OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

## PATRONESS OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

### “She Who Crushes the Serpent”

By Yves Jacques

Our Blessed Lady understands all her children; she knows what is in their hearts, and how to reach out to each and every one of them. Through her words to Juan Diego, and by the miraculous image that she left imprinted on his tilma, she “speaks” to her children; a message that is still as relevant today as it was to the Indian people almost 500 years ago. For this reason she was declared *Patroness of the New Evangelization for the Americas* by Pope John Paul II in 1999:

**“Now Our Lady accompanies each one of her daughters and sons with her motherly presence. I ask her to ‘visit’ as a ‘pilgrim of faith’ – each and every diocese, parish and family in America, repeating to her children what she said at Cana, ‘Do whatever He tells you’ (Jn 2:5). May she cross this continent bringing it ‘life, sweetness and hope!’ May she enliven and protect work of the New Evangelization, so that Christians may live their faith with consistency and fervor, and that those who have abandoned it may return. May she promote the unity of the Church, reuniting as in a new Pentecost those who believe in Jesus Christ and those who need to be renewed by the Spirit.” (Ecclesia in America)**

In this image of Our Lady, the word of God is proclaimed in a manner that the Aztec people could relate to. The “symbols” of the image imprinted on the tilma gave a distinct message to them. The young Virgin, dressed as Aztec Royalty, is wearing a black sash at her waist – a sign that she is with child. Her head is bowed and Her eyes are lowered, indicating that She is not a goddess: She is instead, in prayerful adoration before the Incarnate Word made Flesh whom She carries within Her womb. She is standing in front of the sun with 12 of the rays encircling her head, and the moon under her feet ... **“A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.” (-Revelation 12:1)** By this it could be clearly understood that she was greater than both the sun and the moon which they worshipped. She is held up by an angel, a celestial being, signifying Her Heavenly origin. The constellations of stars imprinted on her robes seem to encircle her womb. There is also a jasmine flower, the only four-petal flower depicted on the tilma, that appears directly over her womb. The jasmine is the Aztec symbol for divinity and the “center of the cosmic order.” This left them to understand that the child, Jesus Christ, was the One True God, “Center of the Universe.”

The words of love that she spoke to her humble servant Juan Diego comforted them:

**“...I am the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the True God, for whom we live, of the Creator of all things, Lord of heaven and earth. I wish that a temple be erected here quickly, so I may therein exhibit and give all My love, compassion, help,**

**and protection, because I am your merciful mother, to you and to all the inhabitants on this land and all the rest who love Me, invoke and confide in Me, to listen there to their lamentations, and remedy all their miseries, afflictions and sorrows. And to accomplish what My clemency pretends...”**

All these signs prompted them to place themselves under the protection of her maternal mantle.



The wedding feast at Cana

They began coming from far and wide to see this miraculous image and in a very short period of time more than nine million souls were baptized. These same people who had up until then been worshipping the serpent god, sacrificing their own people to these gods, were now coming in large numbers to confess their sins and to received for the first time Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

Our Lady continues to manifest herself through her holy image, and millions of people come in pilgrimage to her shrine in Mexico annually to implore her motherly intercession. Exact replicas of this

image have been reproduced, and touched to the original tilma. These missionary images now travel throughout the world. They are carried in processions in churches and even through the streets, enabling millions more to experience her maternal love and compassion. There have been thousands of conversions, healings and miracles that have happened. Just from having the image present, or by touching it, many young mothers contemplating an abortion, have had a change of heart and not gone through with their abortion. There have even been abortion clinics that have closed through her intercession.

When the Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego in 1531, she had her children of the 20th Century in mind. Some of the signs on the tilma have only been discovered because of the modern technology of today. Recently it was discovered that there are at least 13 people reflected in the eyes of the Virgin. Among them is a mother carrying her baby on her back. In these times today where the family is under such attack from so many different dimensions, and babies are being destroyed by millions in their mother’s wombs in abortion mills, this is a very significant find!



Bishops and priests who came to our seminar in Rougemont, Quebec, Canada, in September of 2010

**“The Catholic Social Teaching; an essential part of the New Evangelization.” (Pope John Paul II)**

Our Lady of Guadalupe makes no distinctions as to who her children are. She invites us all to come to her and she offers to each of us her motherly care. She invites us to renounce sin and to turn to her Son Jesus. It is her promise that she will “*crush the head of the Serpent*”. The new idols of our day: power, money, pleasure, consumerism...degrade and dehumanize the world. The Church does not remain idle. She has identified these *demons* in the present social, financial and political spheres, and it is through the Catholic Social Teaching that she proposes a remedy in order to build a civilization of love.

In his encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI states that the Catholic Social Teaching, “... is an expression of the prophetic task of the Supreme Pontiffs to give apostolic guidance to the Church of Christ and to discern the new demands of evangelization.” This is illustrated by three cornerstones: **The Dignity of the Human Person, Subsidiarity and Solidarity**. These pillars of the Social Doctrine confirm that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God and has a right to life from the moment of conception. Each person is unique and should be permitted to develop to his full potential in the family of God throughout his entire life, until natural death. We all have God as our Father, with Christ as our brother and Mary as our Mother.

Presently we are faced with many different ideologies such as: Communism, Socialism, secular humanism, unbridled capitalism, globalization... these contain many errors that the Church must address and which are contrary to the dignity of man.

**“The Church does not have a technical solution to offer...She does, however, have a mission of truth to accomplish, in every time and circumstance, for a society that is attuned to man, to his dignity, to his vocation...Fidelity to man requires fidelity to the truth, which alone is the guarantee of freedom (cf. Jn 8:32) and of the possibility of integral human development. For this reason the Church searches for truth, proclaims it tirelessly and recognizes it wherever it is manifested. This mission of truth is something that the Church can never renounce. Her social doctrine is a particular dimension of this proclamation: it is a service to the truth which sets us free. Open to the truth, from whichever branch of knowledge it comes, the Church’s social doctrine receives it, assembles into a unity the fragments in which it is often found, and mediates it within the constantly changing life-patterns of the society of peoples and nations.” (Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate)**

According to the Second Vatican Council it is the role of the laity to bring Christ to the contemporary world. As laity, we all need to find concrete solutions for the application of the Church’s Social teaching and to apply the Gospel in every aspect of today’s society; economic as well as political. As Pilgrims of St. Michael we take the Popes request seriously to renew the whole of society. Twice a year we have seminars that are attended by numerous bishops, priests and laity from all over the world. They come to learn about the Social Credit proposals as taught by our founder Louis Even and presented in the light of the Church’s Social Teaching. (for more information on our seminars please contact us at [www.michaeljournal.org](http://www.michaeljournal.org))

In closing let us recognize that this is a spiritual as well as a temporal battle that we are engaged in. Let us ask the Virgin of Guadalupe to enlighten us , uniting us as “*one body in Christ*.” St. Paul in his letter to the Romans 12:9-10, entreats us to, **“Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor.”**

# For the Future of Our Country, America

**“Teach them (the children) their catechism...”**

## Our Lady of Good Help

J.M.J.

By Anne-Marie Jacques

On December 8th, 2010, during a Mass for the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Bishop David Ricken announced a Decree on the authenticity of the apparitions that took place in 1859 in the Diocese of Green Bay, WI., saying that the visions and messages were worthy of belief.

Adele Brise lived in a small town in Brabant, Belgium. She had a very meager education, but a very pleasant and inviting personality. As a young girl, she and a few of her companions had made a promise to the Mother of God to become missionaries to foreign countries. While all of her companions had kept their promises and had entered the religious life, Adele remained at home with her parents.

When Adele was 24 years old her parents decided to come to America. They operated a small farm in the state of Wisconsin and it was one day in October while Adele was making her way to the grist mill, that she suddenly saw before her a beautiful lady, “clothed in dazzling white, with a yellow sash around her waist and a crown of stars around her head standing between two trees, one a maple, the other a hemlock.” Adele was frightened and after a few minutes the vision disappeared. On the following Sunday, October 9th, Adele was on her way to Mass accompanied by her sister Isabel and a friend. Again, the lady appeared to her in the same manner, without saying a word. Adele continued on to the Church, assisted at Mass and then went in search of the priest. Relating to him what had taken place, he told her that, if the lady returned, ask her who she was and what she wanted. On her return home, still accompanied by her sister and friend, she again met with the lovely lady and, as Father had instructed her, she asked, “In God’s name who are you and what do you want of me?” The lady replied:

“I am the Queen of Heaven who prays for the conversion of sinners, and I wish you to do the same. You received Holy Communion this morning and that is well. But you must do more. Make a general confession and offer Communion for the conversion of sinners. If they do not convert and do penance, my Son will be obliged to punish them.”

The two women asked Adele whom she was speaking with, and why they couldn’t see her also. Adele responded, “the Lady says she is the Queen of Heaven.” The Blessed Mother looked kindly at them and said, “Blessed are they that believe without seeing.” She then asked Adele, “What are you doing here in idleness while your companions are working in the vineyard of my Son?” “What more can I do, dear Lady?” Adele said weeping. “Gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation.” “But how shall I teach them who know so little myself?” replied Adele. “Teach them their catechism, how to sign themselves with the sign of the Cross, and how to approach the sacraments; that is what I wish you to do. Go and fear nothing. I will help you.” (Message from the website of Our Lady of Good Help.)

In these rapidly growing settlements there were not enough missionaries to meet the needs of the people. There was but one priest to serve the entire Northeastern part of the state of Wisconsin. As a result the people, and especially the children were not being properly instructed in the Faith. Adele realized that the mission that the Blessed Mother



Sr. Adele Brise



had entrusted to her was very much needed, but she was also very aware of her own lack of education and felt incapable of such a great task. Nevertheless, the Virgin had assured her that she would help her and so, she set to work immediately. Some days she would travel as much as 50 miles up and down the Green Bay Peninsula, to instruct the children in the Faith.

It is not uncommon that Heaven chooses those who, according to the world, are the least qualified. When we consider the first Apostles, Juan Diego, the three children of Fatima, Adele Brise, and so many others. “...God has chosen the weak...of the world to shame the...strong.” (1 Corinthians 1:2) These souls, so emptied of themselves, become “filled” with Christ. Through them God chooses to manifest Himself to the world.

Adele built schools, a chapel, and a convent to house her small community of Third Order (secular) Franciscans. Thousands began coming to the little chapel which was dedicated as a shrine to Our Lady of Good Help. There were many conversions and miracles that took place in this holy little chapel. Most remarkable was the miracle that occurred during the Great Peshtigo Fire of 1871. The entire area was ravished by the intense heat of the flames. Only the Shrine’s grounds and buildings were virtually left untouched. Even the fence that surrounded the buildings was completely burned on the outside, but on the inside there were no signs of the fire!

How blessed we are that our Blessed Lady’s message should be approved by Bishop David Ricken. His decree comes at a time when our nation is experiencing a great loss of Faith as a result of lack of catechesis. Our Blessed Mother’s message to Adele



Bishop Ricken

was very urgent: **“Pray for the conversion of sinners... teach the children their catechism.”** Our children are the future and the hope of this beautiful country dedicated

to Our Blessed Mother, under Her title of the Immaculate Conception. We need to take it to heart the instruction of our children in the faith, **“teach them what they should know for salvation.”** We must begin by going to Confession and receiving the Sacraments frequently, and praying the family Rosary daily. Our Blessed Mother has assured us that if we convert, and teach the Love of God to our children, our Nation will be saved. It is with great hope that we remember the parting words of Our Blessed Mother to Adele: **“Go and fear nothing, I will help you.”**

**Our Lady of Good Help, Pray for Us**

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