

Our Lady of Guadalupe **Patroness of the Americas and Protectress of the Unborn**

OPENING PRAYER

5 minutes

God, in Your concern and love for Your people You favored the New World with the appearance of Mary, Mother of Jesus, at Guadalupe. Help the countries of this New World to live with one another in peace, unity, and brotherhood. Watch over inhabitants of all these countries, born and unborn, young and old. Convert our hearts to love Christ and to protect the defenseless. Amen. (adapted from prayer in *Lives of the Saints*, Catholic Book Publishing Corp. (2005))



Dios te salve, María,
llena eres de gracia,
El Señor es contigo.
Bendita tú eres entre todas las mujeres,
y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre, Jesús.

Santa María, Madre de Dios,
ruega por nosotros pecadores,
ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte.
Amén.

OBJECTIVE

Help students to understand the Blessed Virgin's role as Patroness of the Americas and Protectress of the Unborn.

Learning Objectives

During this presentation it is essential to communicate the following points:

- Mary leads us to Christ just as she lead millions of South American people, including Juan Diego, to Christ. Through her intercession, we can build a culture of life.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe met Juan Diego where he was – speaking in his native tongue, looking like a native to his homeland.
- We must always look to bring others to understand the need to build a culture of life and also be open to conversion in our own hearts.

ACTIVITY

5 minutes

from www.catholic.org.

Invite one student to read the narrator's part. Invite a female student to read Mary's part.

Narrator: On December 9, 1531, Juan Diego, a 57 year old, poor, Aztec indian convert to Christianity, was walking through the Tepeyac hill country in central Mexico on a trip to the chapel when he encountered a beautiful woman surrounded by a ball of light. Speaking in his native tongue, the beautiful lady identified herself:

Mary: *"My dear little son, I love you. I desire you to know who I am. I am the ever-virgin Mary, Mother of the true God who gives life and maintains its existence. He created all things. He is in all places. He is Lord of Heaven and Earth. I desire a church in this place where your people may experience my compassion. All those who sincerely ask my help in their work and in their sorrows will know my Mother's Heart in this place. Here I will see their tears; I will console them and they will be at peace. So run now to Tenochtitlan and tell the Bishop all that you have seen and heard."*

Narrator: Juan, who had never been to Tenochtitlan, immediately followed Mary's request. The bishop-elect told Juan that he would consider the request. Juan was disappointed and felt himself unworthy to persuade a bishop, so he returned to the hill where Mary was waiting for him. She responded:

Mary: *"My little son, there are many I could send. But you are the one I have chosen."*

Narrator: She then told him to return the next day to the bishop. The bishop asked for a sign of proof. Juan dutifully returned to the hill and told Mary, who responded:

Mary: *"My little son, am I not your Mother? Do not fear. The Bishop shall have his sign. Come back to this place tomorrow. Only peace, my little son."*

Narrator: Unfortunately, Juan was not able to return because his uncle was ill. After two days, with his uncle near death, Juan left his side to find a priest. As he passed Tepeyac Hill to get to the priest, he found Mary waiting for him. She spoke:

Mary: *"Do not be distressed, my littlest son. Am I not here with you who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Your uncle will not die at this time. There is no reason for you to engage a priest, for his health is restored at this moment. He is quite well. Go to the top of the hill and cut the flowers that are growing there. Bring them then to me."*

Narrator: While it was freezing on the hillside, where usually only cactuses grew, Juan obeyed Mary's instructions and went to the top of the hill where he found a full bloom of roses. Removing his tilma, a poncho-like caper, he cut the roses and carried them back to Mary. She rearranged the roses and told him:

Mary: *"My little son, this is the sign I am sending to the Bishop. Tell him that with this sign I request his greatest efforts to complete the church I desire in this place. Show these flowers to no one else but the Bishop. You are my trusted ambassador. This time the Bishop will believe all you tell him."*

Narrator: Juan told the bishop his story and opened the tilma letting the flowers fall out. But it wasn't the beautiful roses that caused the bishop and his advisors to fall to their knees; for there, on the tilma, was a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary precisely as Juan had described her. The next day, Juan took the bishop to the spot where he first met Mary. He then returned to his village where he met his uncle who was completely cured. His uncle told him he had met a young woman, surrounded by a soft light, who told him that she had just sent his nephew to Tenochtitlan with a picture of herself. She told his uncle:

Mary: *"Call me and call my image Santa Maria de Guadalupe".*

Following Our Lady of Guadalupe's apparition and the miracle, there was a tidal wave of conversions. An early missionary, the Franciscan Father Toribio de Benavente, recorded in his *Historia de los Indios*, published in 1541, that "I have to affirm that at the convent of Quecholac, another priest and myself baptized 14,200 souls in five days."

(<http://www.maryourmother.net/Guadalupe.html>)



ACTIVITY

10 minutes

from <http://www.maryourmother.net/Guadalupe.html>.

Ask students what they notice about the tilma?

- Mary is depicted as a young Indian woman. She is not Spanish or European, but appears as a young Indian maiden. Her rose dress, adorned with a jasmine flower, eight petal flowers, and nine heart flowers symbolic to the Aztec culture, is that of an Aztec princess.
- Mary is surrounded by stars. The stars on the mantle signified the beginning of a new civilization. La Morenita appeared on the day of the winter solstice, considered the day of the sun's birth; the Virgin's mantle accurately represents the 1531 winter solstice!
- Mary's hands are folded in prayer. She shows reverence to God.
- Mary is pregnant. The tilma shows Mary as the God-bearer - she is pregnant with her Divine Son. Mary wore a black maternity band, signifying she was with child. At the center of the picture, overlying her womb, is a jasmine flower in the shape of an Indian cross, which is the sign of the Divine and the center of the cosmic order to the Aztec. This symbol indicated that the baby Mary carried within her, Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh, is Divine and the new center of the universe. On the brooch around her neck was a black Christian cross, indicating she is both a bearer and follower of Christ, the Son of God, our Savior, who died on the Cross to save mankind.
- Rays of sun shine behind Mary. Mary stands in front of and hides the sun, but the rays of the sun still appear around her, signifying she is greater than the sun god, the greatest of the native divinities, but the rays of the sun still bring light. Twelve rays of the sun surround her face and head.
- Mary stands on the moon. She stands on the moon, supported by an angel with wings like an eagle: to the Aztec, this indicated her superiority to the moon god, the god of night, and her divine, regal nature.

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

LECTURE

5 minutes

Where it is today and its condition:

- The tilma has withstood a variety of environmental hazards including smoke from fires and candles, water from floods and torrential downpours and, in 1921, a bomb. There was

also a cast-iron cross next to the tilma and when the bomb exploded, the cross was twisted out of shape, the marble altar rail was heavily damaged and the tilma was . . . untouched! Indeed, no one was injured in the Church despite the damage that occurred to a large part of the altar structure.

- Infrared photography and digital enhancement techniques show no sketching or any sign of outline drawn to permit an artist to produce a painting.
- It can be seen today in a large cathedral built to house up to ten thousand worshippers. It is, by far, the most popular religious pilgrimage site in the Western Hemisphere.

VIDEO

5 minutes

Word on Fire in Mexico: At Our Lady of Guadalupe

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9QmxmZBSR4>
- 2 ½ minutes

LECTURE

5 minutes

Why is Our Lady of Guadalupe Protectress of the Unborn?

She holds within her the unborn Christ, proclaiming the sanctity and blessedness of life within the womb. Her reverence and tenderness communicate to us the joy and awe with which we must approach each nascent life.

In Juan Diego's homeland, human sacrifice was common. Into this cavern of darkness and ignorance, our Lady of Guadalupe brought a message of maternal compassion.

Facing the attacks on human life in our world today, we implore the help of Our Lady of Guadalupe who converted approximately nine million Aztecs to see the love and hope of Christianity. Let us, with her assistance, convert hearts and minds to yearn for a culture of life.

LESSONS

5 minutes

Ask students what they have learned.

- God has chosen Mary to lead us to Jesus, as she led so many thousands of Mexicans in the 1500's.
- Mary appeared to Juan Diego not as a Middle Eastern woman that she was or a European Madonna as she is so often depicted, but as an Aztec princess, speaking to him in his native language. If we want to help someone understand the Gospel of Life, we must appreciate where they are coming from and meet them where they are. By understanding and loving them, we can help them to understand and love Christ and others.
- Only through Christ can we expect to convert hearts to a culture of life.
- Others?

QUESTIONS

5 minutes

CLOSING PRAYER

God of power and mercy,
you blessed the Americas at Tepeyac
with the presence of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe.
May her prayers help all men and women
to accept each other as brothers and sisters.
Through your justice present in our hearts
may Your peace reign in the world.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit, one God,
for ever and ever.

Amen.