



Queen of the Americas Guild

JMJ

2020 NATIONAL NEWSLETTER VOLUME 34 | ISSUE 1
311 Kautz Road | St. Charles, Illinois 60174

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ON THE COVER:

This year's cover art, entitled "Mother of Life," is by artist Nellie Edwards. A long-time pro-life activist, Nellie uses her artwork—especially this one, depicting Our Lady of Guadalupe in Adoration of her unborn Savior-son—to evangelize and help build the "Culture of Life." Thousands of other passionate pro-lifers around the country use this and other artwork depicting "The Word Made Flesh" for convincing abortion-bound women to see their baby in a new "light" and choose life! *Nellie's website and gallery: www.PaintedFaith.Net*



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Saint Joseph the Workman, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe – La Crosse, Wisconsin

2020 Queen of the Americas Guild conference postponed

Due to COVID-19, the Guild has made the difficult decision to postpone the 2020 Queen of the Americas Guild conference at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wisconsin, which had been scheduled for July 31 & August 1, 2020. The decision was made with great consideration and prayer, which led us to the conclusion that cancellation was necessary to ensure the health and safety of our pilgrims.

Fortunately, we have been able to reschedule the same program, "Human Life and its Cradle in the Family Formed by Marriage" to July 30 & 31, 2021. Details and registration information for the 2021 conference can be found on pages 14-17.

Please remember that the Shrine is open to individual pilgrims during this crisis, with the Shrine Church remaining open for private prayer. Please visit it if possible, or lend your support to its annual appeal at guadalupeshrine.org. Please keep the Shrine and all its supporters in your prayers.





The Queen of the Americas Guild is now on Facebook. Like us and you will be able to follow the latest Guild news, view photos from our events, and get information on our upcoming events and new products.

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By Christopher Smoczynski



PRESIDENT...

Guild President Christopher Smoczynski

t has been several months now since we first heard about the horrific COVID-19 virus pandemic. We've all heard the recommendations countless times — "social distancing", washing your hands, wearing masks in public spaces. In fact, we've heard these things so many times by now that they have become our "new normal". These things are certainly effective in lessening the spread of disease, and we need to continue to practice them vigilantly.

But it is especially important in times of crisis to turn to our merciful mother, Our Lady of Guadalupe. For nearly 500 years, her words to Saint Juan Diego have offered comfort and assurance to those in need:

... "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."

During the past several months, Jesus Christ and Our Lady have been present for me and for all of my prayers, protecting and strengthening my family through the new challenges we now face. Despite these new challenges, I am always comforted by Our Lady's beautiful lasting image, miraculously imprinted on the tilma of Saint Juan Diego, and of her loving words of encouragement to all who need her comfort.

An excellent prayer to Our Lady, authored by Archbishop Jose Gomez, can be found on page 21.

As always, I look forward to another year with the Queen of the Americas Guild and hope that you will take the opportunity to join us at our conference in La Crosse in 2021. Please keep our work, our Board of Directors, and all of our members in your prayers.

Queen of the Americas Guild Board of Directors



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Our Lady of Guadalupe,

Guide and Intercessor

in Time of Turmoil

By Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke



His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke

INTRODUCTION

There is no question that society, in general, and the Church are currently experiencing one of the greatest crises which they have ever known. Today, perhaps as at no time in the past, there is an ever more diffuse phenomenon of general confusion and error, also within the Body of Christ, about the fundamental truths regarding human life, the family as the cradle of human life, and religion, that is, man's relationship with God, which has its ultimate expression in worship of God "in spirit and truth." Even as the crisis is manifested in many alarming ways in the life of society and of the Church, it is experienced perhaps most devastatingly in the family.

For example, recently I met parents of four adult children, who live in a country which has legislated marriage between two persons of the same sex. One of the four children is a cloistered nun, one is seriously considering entrance into a community of cloistered monks, one is married, and the fourth child, a successful teacher in a Catholic school, has announced to her parents her marriage to another woman. The parents, who are practicing Catholics with a solid knowledge of their faith, do not accept their daughter's decision and have made it known that they will not take part in any such so-called marriage. The suffering of the parents is profound, especially since they raised all of their children in the faith. The daughter in question is a good young woman in so many ways, and is a highly respected teacher. They cannot understand how she has deviated so greatly in her moral life.

What can these parents do in the face of such a great crisis in their family? What can we who face similar crises in our homes do? And how do we respond to the crisis in society, in which there is no longer respect for the life of the innocent and defenseless, and for those who have grown weak under the burden of years, of special needs, and of critical illness, and for the right ordering of human sexuality, and for the freedom to practice the Christian religion in public? What is more, how do we respond to situations in the Church, in which so many truths of doctrine and practice are daily called into question and, in some cases, betrayed and contradicted?

Regarding the situation of spreading confusion, error and division in the Church, I, together with Cardinal Janis Pujats, Archbishop Emeritus of Riga in Latvia, Archbishops Tomash Peta, Archbishop of Saint Mary in Astana in Kazakhstan, and Jan Pawel Lenga, Archbishop-Bishop Emeritus of Karaganda in Kazakhstan, and Bishop Athanasius Schneider, Auxiliary Bishop of Saint Mary in Astana, recently published a document setting forth the official teaching of the Church on some 40 truths concerning which there is presently much confusion, error and division in the Church. For each point, we make reference to authoritative documents which present the Tradition, the constant teaching tradition of the Church, so that the faithful and other rightly disposed persons of good will know that we are not setting forth our own ideas or our personal agenda but, rather, are striving to fulfill our responsibility as true teachers of the faith.

The document is entitled Declaration of the Truths Relating to Some of the Most Common Errors in the Life of the Church of Our Time. It was published on May 31 of this year, the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the calendar of the Ordinary Form, and the Feast of the Queenship of Mary in the calendar of the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite. In publishing the Declaration, we Cardinals and Bishops entrusted it "to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God under the invocation 'Salus Populi Romani' ('Salvation of the Roman People'), considering the privileged spiritual meaning which this icon has for the Roman Church."2 The Declaration closes with the prayer, quoting the Preface for the Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, "Salvation of the Roman People,": "May the entire Catholic Church, under the protection of the Immaculate Virgin and Mother of God, 'fight intrepidly the fight of the Faith, persist firmly in the doctrine of the Apostles and proceed safely amidst the storms of the world until she reaches the heavenly city'."3 The Declaration is available in English translation as a booklet published by the Marian Catechist Apostolate.

In such a troubled time in the family, in the Church, and in society in general, Our Lady of Guadalupe is both our secure guide and our powerful intercessor. Even as she appeared in what is now Mexico in 1531, at a time in which the local society was suffering profoundly from the widespread practice of human sacrifice and from the ever-growing hostility between the Native Americans

and the Spanish explorers and settlers, she has remained with her children of America and of every nation by means of her image which God, in an unexplainable way, that is, in a miraculous way, imprinted upon the *tilma* or mantle of Saint Juan Diego, Our Lady's heroic messenger. By her apparitions, by her words and her intercession, she brought peace to the people and inspired millions of conversions to the true Catholic faith.

Rightly then, we turn to Our Lady of Guadalupe in a time like the present, to seek her guidance and to implore her intercession on our behalf. I now present critical points of guidance from Our Lady of Guadalupe. As our Mother, her guidance is always accompanied by her intercession for the grace we need to follow it.

THE FOUNDATION OF TRUTH AND LOVE

The first guidance which Our Lady of Guadalupe gives us is the recognition of the primacy of truth and love in our personal lives, in the Body of Christ, and in the whole of society. The entire context of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe is the central place of a personal commitment to instruction in the truths of the faith. At her first apparition on December 9, 1531, Our Lady asks Juan Diego where he is going. He responds:

My Lady, my Queen, my Little Girl, I am going as far as your little house in Mexico Tlatelolco, to follow the things of God that are to us given, that are taught to us by our priests, those who are the images of the Lord, Our Lord.4 Although the home of Juan Diego was in Cuauhtitlán, his spiritual home was Tlatelolco, the place of his baptism and of his ongoing instruction in the Catholic faith. Our Lady favors with her apparition and chooses as her messenger a humble Christian who is seeking to deepen his knowledge of the faith through instruction from the priest whom he acknowledges as an image of Christ alive for us in the Church. He gives expression to the truth that the priest, by virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, acts in the person of Christ, Head and Shepherd of the flock in every time and place. He shows us that only the truth, ultimately the Truth Who is Our Lord Jesus Christ alive for us in His holy Church, permits us to grow in holiness of life and thus to find joy and peace during the days of our earthly pilgrimage and their fullness at the destiny of our pilgrimage, the Kingdom of Heaven.

When Our Lady begins to speak with him, she immediately declares the truth of her being, of her relationship with God as Mother of God the Son Incarnate, and of her relationship with Juan Diego, as with all Christians. She declares:

Know, know for sure my dearest and youngest son, that I am truly the ever perfect Holy Virgin Mary, who has the honor to be Mother of the one true God for whom we all live, the Creator of people, the Lord of all around us

Raymond Leo Burke, Janis Pujats, Tomash Peta, Jan Pawel Lenga, and Athanasius Schneider, *Declaration of the Truths Relating to Some of the Most Common Errors in the Life of the Church of Our Time* (La Crosse, WI: Marian Catechist Apostolate, 2019), p. 5. [Declaration].

³ Declaration, p. 5.

^{4 &}quot;Appendix A: The Nican Mopohua," in Carl A. Anderson and Eduardo Chávez, Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love (New York: Doubleday, 2009), p. 173. [Nican Mopohua].



and of what is close to us, the Lord of Heaven, the Lord of Earth. 5

What is primary for Our Lady in her relationship with Juan Diego and in his collaboration as her messenger is the truth that she is the Virgin Mother of God the Son Incarnate Who is the King of Heaven and Earth and Who alone is our salvation.

The first lesson which Our Lady of Guadalupe teaches us to equip us for today's grave crisis is the inseparable unity of truth and love. We cannot truly love another person while also disregarding or betraying the truth which should inform every relationship. The fundamental approach to the crisis of the family, of society, and of the Church is the knowledge of truth and the practice of it with love. Today, it is sometimes said that the Church must take a new approach, called "pastoral," and abandon a doctrinal approach. Such an approach could not be more mistaken, as Our Lady shows us, for Christ the Good Shepherd, Christ the Pastor of the Church, informs all of His pastoral action with the truth.

CHRIST ALONE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

What help does the Mother of God bring to the world in tumultuous times? What help did she bring at Tepeyac in 1531? She brings her Divine Son, Christ the Lord Who alone is the salvation of the

world. After identifying herself as the Mother of God, Our Lady declares her mission:

I want very much that they build my sacred little house here, in which I will show Him, I will exalt Him upon making Him manifest, I will give Him to all people in all my personal love, Him that is my compassionate gaze, Him that is my help, Him that is my salvation.⁶

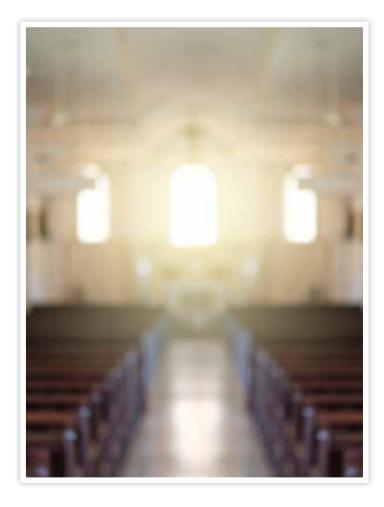
Our Lady does not propose some idea or some political action to address the various crises facing man. No, she proposes a person, the person of her Divine Son. She proposes the most intimate union of heart with Him as the only way to obtain mercy and ultimately eternal life. She tells Juan Diego that Christ is in fact her "compassionate gaze," even as He is her "help," her "salvation."

In this way, too, she shows us what is the help which we offer to the world and the Church in a time of great turmoil. We offer Jesus Christ. As much as is possible, we desire that those who look love upon us will see the face of Christ and be drawn to Him Who alone can save them.

Today, and, in particular, in the Working Document (*Instrumentum Laboris*) of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region, it is stated that the "seeds of the Word" are already found in the pagan culture and that the Church should not evangelize

⁵ Nican Mopohua, p. 173.

⁶ Nican Mopohua, p. 173.



with "formulations of the faith from other cultural contexts that do not respond to its vital context." The falsehood underlying the proposed approach is that the truth is relative and that it has not found definitive expression in the official teaching or Magisterium of the Church. In the Declaration of the Truths Relating to Some of the Most Common Errors in the Life of the Church of Our Time, the truth regarding such an approach to a pagan culture is declared:

Spiritualities and religions that promote any kind of idolatry or pantheism cannot be considered either as "seeds" or as "fruits" of the Divine Word, since they are deceptions that preclude the evangelization and eternal salvation of their adherents as it is taught by Holy Scripture: "The god of this world has made blind the minds of those who have not faith, so that the light of the good news of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not be shining on them" (2 Cor 4:4). ⁸

The Church, in her approach to the world, offers only one help, a help which is indeed salvation: Jesus Christ alive in His Church. Christ, along the Christian centuries, through the work of the Holy Spirit has given expression to His saving truth. Any element of a pagan culture to be appreciated and even prized must be so because in some way it

coheres with the truth of Christ and is perfected in the truth of Christ. Interestingly, the theme of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region does not mention the name of Christ and suggests a new vision of the Church, closely bound to a secular environmentalism. There is a widespread error today that the ecumenism mandated by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council aims at the establishment of a church that does not currently exist, a new invention of our time. The Declaration of the Truths sets for the truth in the matter: "True ecumenism intends that non-Catholics should enter that unity which the Catholic Church already indestructibly possesses in virtue of the prayer of Christ, always heard by His Father, 'that they may be one' (John 17:11)."

Here it is also helpful to recall the first truth of the Creed which is presented in the just-mentioned *Declaration of the Truths*. The first truth of the Creed to be presented regards the relationship of the Kingdom of God with the world. The Declaration quotes the Apostolic Letter of Pope Saint Paul VI, *Solemni hac liturgia* of June 30, 1968, known in English as the "Credo of the People of God":

The Kingdom of God begun here below in the Church of Christ is not of this world whose form is passing, and its proper growth cannot be confounded with the progress of civilization, of science or of human technology, but it consists in an ever more profound knowledge of the unfathomable riches of Christ, an ever stronger hope in eternal blessings, and ever more ardent response to the love of God, and ever more generous bestowal of grace and holiness among men. ¹⁰

The solicitude of the Church for the world can have only one end in mind: to bring Christ to the world for its transformation. I refer you to the luminous Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Dominus lesus: On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church," issued on August 6, 2000. The Declaration in question gives clear direction in the face of an ever more pervasive confusion and error which would bring into question the sole font of salvation in the Redemptive Incarnation of God the Son.

Today, some think that the Church should approach the world in a way which identifies with the world, rejoicing in the situation of the world as if it could be saved apart from the grace of Christ. The Declaration concludes: "The opinion is, therefore, erroneous that says that God is glorified in the temporal and earthly condition of the human race." Our Lady of Guadalupe, in her direct and clear discourse with Saint Juan Diego, made it absolutely clear that she had come to bring Christ to the culture and not to make a good of the culture.

THE PRIMACY OF DIVINE WORSHIP

How does Our Lady propose that we know and serve her Divine Son Who alone is our salvation? Having announced to Saint Juan Diego the

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Sinodo de los Obispos, Asamblea Especial para la Región Panamazonica, Amazonia: nuevos caminos para la Iglesia y para un ecología integral, *Instrumentum Laboris* (Città del Vaticano: Librería Editrice Vaticana, 2019), p. 102, no. 120.

⁸ Declaration, p. 9, no. 6.

⁹ Declaration, p. 9, no. 7.

¹⁰ Declaration, p. 8, no. 3.

¹¹ Declaration, p. 8, no. 3.

truth about herself and her relationship with God, and the truth about her Divine Son, Savior of the World, she asks that a chapel be built in which she will draw the faithful to encounter her Divine Son. She does not propose that he start a movement or some other initiative for the carrying out of Our Lady's mission but rather that he ask Bishop Juan de Zumárraga to build a chapel:

I want very much that they build my sacred little house here, in which I will show Him, I will exalt Him upon making Him manifest, I will give Him to all people in all my personal love, Him that is my compassionate gaze, Him that is my help, Him that is my salvation. 12

Christ communicates the truth to us in His holy Church through our personal encounter with Him in the Church's Magisterium, thanks to Apostolic Tradition. That communication reaches its fullness in our communion with Him through prayer and above all through the Sacred Liturgy, His most precious gift to us.

In what context does the Virgin of Guadalupe propose to teach us the mystery of God's ever-faithful and all-merciful love? It is in the context of our entrance into the House of God to pray and to offer to Him the worship which He Himself inspires in us and strengthens us to carry out. In the Sacred Liturgy, Christ Himself acts in our midst for the glory of God and for our eternal salvation. In fact, it is only in the House of God that our greatest hunger and thirst are satisfied: we know God, in a real, sacramental way in Penance and, above all, in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. What is more, in the holy place in which these sacramental encounters take place, we are inspired to pray before the Blessed Sacrament reposed in the tabernacle. We pray under the loving gaze of the Virgin Mother of God, of her most pure spouse, Saint Joseph, and of all the saints, living our hearts, one with theirs, to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus.

We understand, therefore, that the ultimate goal of every pilgrimage, that the heart of every shrine or holy place, as is the case also with this sacred place, is the chapel or church to which Our Lady of Guadalupe leads us and in which Christ her Divine Son receives us to forgive our sins and to unite us in heart with His Most Sacred Heart through the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Our Lady makes clear that the mercy of God, incarnate in her Divine Son, is experienced by us in a pre-eminent way in the House of God, through prayer and divine worship:

Because truly I am honored to be your compassionate mother, yours and that of all the people who live together in this land, and also of all the other various lineages of men; those who love me, those who cry out to me, those who seek me, those who trust in me. Because there [at my sacred house] truly will I hear their cry, their sadness, in order to remedy, to cure all their various troubles, their miseries, their pains. ¹³

When Our Lady provided to Saint Juan Diego the sign which the Bishop had requested, she insisted on the importance of the chapel as the locus of the manifestation of God's all-merciful love:

My youngest son, these different kinds of flowers are the proof, the sign that you will take to the Bishop; you will tell him from me that in them he is to see my wish and that therefore he is to carry out my will; and you, you are my messenger, in you I place my absolute trust. And I strictly order you that only alone, in the Bishop's presence, you will open your tilma and show him what you are carrying; and you will tell him everything exactly, you will tell him that I ordered you to climb to the top of the little hill to cut the flowers, and everything you saw and admired; so that you can convince the Governing Priest, so that he will then do what is entrusted to him, to build my little sacred house that I have asked for. 14

In the end, everything regarding the apparitions is directed to the establishment of the chapel as a place of pilgrimage, of a privileged encounter with the Lord through the mediation of His Virgin Mother.

Let us listen to the account of the presentation of the sign to the Bishop:

And then he opened his white tilma, in the follow of which were the flowers. And all the different flowers, like those from Castille, fell to the floor. Then and there his tilma became the sign, there suddenly appeared the Beloved Image of the Perfect Virgin Saint Mary, Mother of God, in the form and figure in which it is now, where it is preserved her beloved little house, in her sacred little house in Tepeyac, which is called Guadalupe ...

And the Bishop got up, and untied Juan Diego's garment, his tilma, from his neck where it was tied, on which appeared the venerable sign of the Heavenly Queen. And then he took it and placed it in his private chapel. And Juan Diego still stayed for the day in the Bishop's house, who still kept him there. And on the next day he [the Bishop] said to him: "Come, let's go so you can show me where it is that the venerable will of the Queen of Heaven wants Her chapel built." Immediately the order was given to make it, to build it. And Juan Diego, as soon as he showed where the Lady of Heaven had ordered that Her sacred little house be built, asked for permission to leave ... And after some time, the Reverend Bishop moved the beloved Image of the Heavenly Maiden to the main church. He [the Bishop] took it from his palace, from his chapel where it had been, so that everyone could see and admire Her precious Image. And absolutely everyone, the entire city, without exception, trembled when they went to behold, to admire Her precious Image. They came to acknowledge it as something divine. They met to offer Her their prayers. They marveled at the miraculous way it had appeared since absolutely no one on Earth had painted Her beloved Image.15

¹² Nican Mopohua, p. 173.

¹³ Nican Mopohua, p. 174.

¹⁴ Nican Mopohua, p. 180

¹⁵ Nican Mopohua, pp. 182-183

In fact, from the time of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the enshrinement of her miraculous image in the successions of chapels and churches built near Tepeyac Hill, the devotion to Our Lady has favored a profound and rich life of prayer and divine worship.

In building the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe here, there was, from the beginning, a careful attention to have everything about the Shrine direct itself to the Shrine Church, indeed the heart of the Shrine. At the same time, in the planning and construction of the Church, every effort was made to reflect the ineffable beauty of God and of His faithful and enduring love of us, most especially in the Redemptive Incarnation of His only-begotten Son. Regarding the Sacred Liturgy, there has been, from the day of the Solemn Dedication of the Church, the effort to implement fully the Motu Proprio of Pope Benedict XVI, Summorum Pontificum, also by restoring the ancient and beautiful practices of reception of Holy Communion while kneeling and on the tongue, and the offering of the Holy Mass, facing the Lord or versus Dominum.

HER MESSENGERS, GOD-BEARERS

The last direction of the Virgin Mother of God, Our Lady of Guadalupe, is that we are to become her messengers. Throughout the days of the apparitions, Saint Juan Diego was subject to the temptations of Satan who placed in him the doubt that he was worthy and capable of carrying out the directions and orders of the Heavenly Queen. After his first visit to the Bishop, he was convinced that only someone of higher social status could carry out the mission. In a rather eloquent way, he described his own lowliness to the Virgin Mother of God:

So I beg you, my Lady, my Queen, my little Girl, to have one of the nobles who are held in esteem, one who is known, respected, honored, have him carry on, take your venerable breath, your venerable word, so that he will be believed. Because I am really just a man from country, I'm the porter's rope, I'm a back frame, just a tail, a wing; I myself need to be led, carried on someone's back; there, where you sent me, it is not my place to go or to stay, my little Girl, my littlest Daughter, my Lady, my Girl. Please, excuse me, I will afflict your face, your heart; I will fall into your anger, your displeasure, my Lady Mistress. ¹⁶

But the Mother of God, the Mother of Divine Grace, that he, too, is called to carry out the mission of bringing God Incarnate to the world, to his brothers and sisters.

Our Lady of Guadalupe assures him that she has many upon whom to call for the mission, but that Juan Diego has been called and, therefore, must trust that he can carry out the mission. She replies to him:

Listen my youngest son, know for sure that I have no lack of servants, of messengers, to whom I can give the task of carrying my breath, my word, so that they carry out my will; but it is necessary that you, personally, go and plead, that by your intercession, my wish, my will, become a reality. And I beg you, my youngest son, and I strictly order you, to go again tomorrow to see the Bishop. And in my name, make him know, make him hear my wish, my will, so that he will bring into being, he will build, my sacred house that I ask of him. 17

Her words reflect a fundamental truth of the faith: the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which enables even the weakest of men to carry out God's will with heroic virtue. The earlier-mentioned *Declaration of the Truths* begins its treatment of the Law of God by affirming that, in accord with the Decree on Justification of the Council of Trent, God grants to the justified soul the grace "to carry out the objective demands of the Divine law." ¹⁸

The final number regarding the Law of God defends the freedom of worship, declaring: "All authority on earth as well as in heaven belongs to Jesus Christ; therefore, civil societies and all other associations of men are subject to his kingship so that 'the duty of offering God genuine worship concerns man both individually and socially' (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2015; see Pius XI, Encyclical *Quas primas*, 18-19; 32).

CONCLUSION

I hope that this reflection has helped you to understand more deeply the message of Our Lady of Guadalupe to all the faithful and to us, in particular, in these days of great crisis in the family, in the Church, and in society, in general. Her apparitions, her presence on our continent and her message constitute, in fact, a sure guide through the choppy waters which we must navigate in our day.

Through our fundamental and unswerving respect for the truth as the ineluctable condition of love, including pastoral love in the Church, through our recognition of Our Lord as the only Savior of the World, through the primacy of prayer and divine worship in our daily living, and through the fulfillment of our mission as messengers of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we will find the way to serve best the Church. Overall, we must always keep in mind that fundamental truth of Christ's dwelling with us in His holy Church, the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our souls. May our reflection today give us wisdom and courage in defending the faith in the face of so much confusion and error. The confession of our faith in its integrity is the only way to a virtuous life, and a virtuous life is the only way to our happiness on this earth and to its fullness in the Kingdom of Heaven.

¹⁶ Nican Mopohua, p. 175

^{17 &}quot;Appendix A: The Nican Mopohua," in Carl Anderson and Eduardo Chávez, Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love (New York: Doubleday, 2009), pp. 175-176. [Nican Mopohua].

¹⁸ Declaration, p. 10, no. 12.



I close with words from the Explanatory Note, which is the preface to the Declaration:

Before the eyes of the Divine Judge and in his own conscience, each bishop, priest, and lay faithful has the moral duty to give witness unambiguously to those truths that in our days are obfuscated, undermined, and denied. Private and public acts of a declaration of these truths could initiate a movement of a confession of the truth, of its defense, and of reparation for the widespread sins against the Faith, for the sins of hidden and open apostasy from Catholic Faith of a not small number both of the clergy and of the lay people. One has to bear in mind, however, that such a movement will not judge itself according to numbers, but according to the truth, as Saint Gregory of Nazianzus said, amidst the general doctrinal confusion of the Arian crisis, that "God does not delight in numbers" (*Or.* 42:7).¹⁹

May our time of prayer and study during these days be in itself such a movement of love for Our Lord and His Mystical Body the Church. May it also inspire us to see how in other ways and in other circumstances we may be able to give glory to God by confessing the truth in love of Him and of our neighbor.

May we never forget the words of the Virgin of Guadalupe to us, through Saint Juan Diego:

Listen, put it into your heart, my youngest son, that what frightened you, what afflicted you is nothing; do not let it disturb your face, your heart; do not fear this sickness or any other sickness, nor any sharp or hurtful thing. Am I not here, I who have the honor to be your mother? Are you not in my shadow and under my protection? Am I not the source of your joy? Are not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do you need anything more? ²⁰

Our Lady of Guadalupe who guides us will never fail to accompany us, interceding for all of the graces which we need to carry the mission in life, which God entrusts into our hands, even in the most troubling and tumultuous of times

Thank you for your kind attention. May God bless you and your homes.



Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

Queen of the Americas Guild Annual Conference
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe
LaCrosse, Wisconsin

27 July 2019

¹⁹ Declaration, p. 3.

²⁰ Nican Mopohua, p. 179.

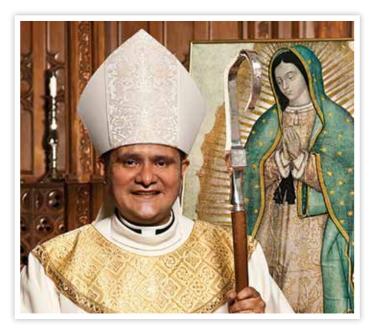


We Seek the Intercession of Our Lady

FOR STRENGTH IN OUR STRUGGLES AGAINST COVID-19



By Most Rev. Arturo Cepeda



His Excellency Bishop Arturo Cepeda

My Brothers and Sisters,

As our world continues to face the ongoing effects of the global pandemic of the coronavirus, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Archbishop José H. Gomez, announced that the U.S. bishops would join the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on May 1 in renewing the consecrations of the two nations to the care of our Blessed Mother.

This act of consecration, celebrated at the beginning of the month of May, is meant to be a reminder to our faithful of the Blessed Mother's witness to the Gospel and to ask for her effective intercession before her Son, our Risen Lord, on behalf of those in need.

It brings me great joy and hope to notice that this act of consecration followed a similar action of the bishop's conference of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAM), who consecrated their nations to Our

Lady of Guadalupe on Easter Sunday. It is worth noticing that this renewal of consecration does not change the designation of Mary as the Patroness of the United States under the title of the Immaculate Conception; rather this form of prayer reaffirms and renews previous Marian entrustments, and as a Catholic community, unites us with our Holy Father Pope Francis, who recently established the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, as a source of protection and strength.

Under the protection of Our Lady, let us turn our attention to the original account of the apparitions of Guadalupe as we know them. Our Mother is not indifferent to sickness and anxiety in our midst. She knows about our uncertainties and supplications. Think about her message to Juan Diego when he found his uncle, Juan Bernardino, seriously ill and in danger of death. When Juan Diego was about to get a priest to hear his uncle's confession and prepare him to die, Our Lady came down the hill and said to him: "What is happening, dearest and youngest of my sons? Where are you going? Where are you heading? To this Juan Diego replied: "Although it grieves me, and may cause you anguish, I must tell you that one of your servants, my uncle is very ill. A terrible sickness has struck him down and he will surely die soon."

After hearing Juan Diego's words, our most merciful Mother said: "Listen, put it into your heart, my youngest and dearest son, that the things that disturb you, the things that afflict you, are nothing. Do not let your countenance, your heart be disturbed. Do not fear this sickness of your uncle or any other sickness, nor anything that is sharp or hurtful. Am I not here, I, who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not the source of your joy?

Am I not here, I, who am your Mother? These are the words from Our Lady of Guadalupe that must resonate in our hearts during this uncertain time! She gives us comfort and hope. We turn to her with love and with confidence that she would listen to us. As we renew our consecration to Our Lady, let us all joyfully proclaim to the world that we have a Mother.

GUADALUPE MIRACLES THROUGH the CENTURIES



Alan Napleton

s I am writing this article the world is experiencing the uncertainty of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and it's not surprising that this occurrence is very unsettling. A pandemic is something most of us have never experienced, so, needless to say, it is causing a great deal of anxiety and even fear.

However, these types of calamities are no stranger to Our Lady of Guadalupe. In the year 1544, just over a decade after her appearances, a deadly plague gripped what is now Mexico City, killing over 12,000 people. Later that year, a pilgrimage of children was organized to Tepeyac, resulting in the immediate cessation of the plague! In 1736, disaster struck again when a plague of typhus took the lives of over 700,000 souls. It's important to note that the plague ceases when on April 27, 1737 Our Lady of Guadalupe is proclaimed patroness of the country. More recently, her image was spared in 1921, when a powerful bomb was hidden by anti-religious government agents in flowers and placed directly below the image. The resulting powerful explosion shattered windows throughout the Cathedral, but miraculously, the image was not damaged at all.

That the image itself is miraculous cannot be denied. The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe appears on the Tilma of Juan Diego. Juan Diego was a common man and tilmas like his were commonplace, used for warmth as well as carrying items. Made

from a plant, it should have disintegrated after just a few years, especially considering that for over two centuries it was hung in early churches without any protective covering and was touched by thousands of pilgrims. Along with human contact, it was commonplace for noblemen to touch the Tilma with their swords.

In many ways, there is a striking parallel between our own age and that of the Aztec civilization immediately before the apparitions of 1531. The taking of innocent life through abortion is our modern- day version of human sacrifice. Millions of lives have been lost to the horror of abortion, dwarfing the number of lives sacrificed to the pagan gods during Juan Diego's time. Now as then, our society is dominated by a certain godlessness, excess and immorality. "We are all under an obscure domination," warned Pope Paul VI in his November 1972 address on the spread of doctrinal error, devil worship and the occult. "This is the work of Satan, the prince of this world, and our Number One enemy."

But all is not lost, and we have the certainty of Our Lady's triumph over the serpent. Nearly 500 years ago, a tangible pledge of hope was left to us by the Mother of Christ, who is our Mother also. To quote the late Francis Johnston, a devoted son of Our Lady of Guadalupe: "From the center of the American continent, there blazes a beacon of reassurances in a nightmarish world, a star above the storm, a kind of supernational Statue of Liberty holding up the Light of the World—the Truth that will set men really free—and proclaiming to a people who walk in darkness a wondrous message of thrilling hope:

'I am your merciful Mother, the Mother of all 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 have confidence in me. Here I will hear their weeping and their sorrows, and will remedy and alleviate their sufferings, necessities and misfortunes ... Do not be troubled or weighed down with grief ... Do not fear any illness or vexation, anxiety or pain. Am I not here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection?

Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the folds of my mantle? In the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else you need?"

In these uncertain times, let's turn to Our Lady of Guadalupe and take comfort in her words and promises—promises that are as significant today as they were nearly five centuries ago!

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Conference at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe was moved to 2021. The updated details follow.



QUEEN OF THE AMERICAS GUILD CONFERENCE

Human Life and its Cradle in the FAMILY FORMED BY MARRIAGE

HOSTED BY HIS EMINENCE RAYMOND LEO CARDINAL BURKE July 30 & 31, 2021 | Open to Everyone

Join the Queen of the Americas Guild for a 2-day conference/retreat examining Our Lady of Guadalupe's relationship to Human Life and its Cradle in the Family Formed by Marriage.





His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke

HIS EMINENCE RAYMOND LEO CARDINAL BURKE

will be our keynote speaker.
As the founder of the
Shrine, His Eminence has
extensive knowledge of
Our Lady of Guadalupe and
her role as Protectress of
the unborn. Cardinal Burke
was appointed the Cardinal
Patron of the Sovereign

Military Order of Malta in November of 2014 and also serves on the Queen of the Americas Guild Board of Directors.



Monsignor Fernando B. Felices Sanchez

MONSIGNOR FERNANDO B. FELICES SANCHEZ

was born in San Juan, PR in 1953. He is a Diocesan priest. He earned his BA in History from Dartmouth College (1975), Juris Doctor (Harvard Law School, 1978), Masters in Theology, Boston St. John's Seminary (1982), Licentiate in Spiritual

Theology (Gregorian Univ., Rome, 2004). He was Rector and Professor at the San Juan Major Seminary (1984-1999), Chancellor of the Archdiocese of San Juan (1999-2003), Pastor of Gruta de Lourdes Parish in Trujillo Alto (2004-2020), and Archdiocesan Censor (2004-2020).

Mons. Felices has written five books books: *De Camino con Santa Teresa*, *The Holy Rosary According to St. John Paul II* (3rd edition) in Spanish, *La Paternidad Spiritual del Sacerdote, El Santuario de la Gruta de Loudes (1925-2005)*, and *Via Lucis*, and many articles on historical and theological themes, including three for the new Catholic Encyclopedia. He founded the Chaplaincy at the UPR Medical School. Mons. Felices is fluent in Spanish, English, French and Italian, and has preached retreats in the USA and Puerto Rico, especially to the Missionaries of Charity of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta. He is currently working on a book on the Soteriological significance of Christ's Descent to the Dead.



Dr. Gianne Emanuela Molla, MD

DR. GIANNA EMANUELA MOLLA, MD

is the daughter for whom Saint Gianna Beretta Molla gave her life. She works full time, with great joy, enthusiasm and deepest gratitude to Our Lord, to spread around the world, particularly in the United States, the example, testimony

and spirituality of her Saint Mother and of her holy father, Pietro. Formerly, Gianna Emanuela practiced as a geriatrician at the Geriatric Institute, Camillo Golgi, in Abbiategrasso, Milan. In 2003, she left her profession to care for her beloved father, who had serious health problems until he died in 2010 at the age of almost 98.



Father Gerald Murray

FATHER GERALD MURRAY

was born in Brooklyn, New York in May 1959 and grew up in New Rochelle. He attended Regis High School and Dartmouth College. He entered St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie in 1980, and was ordained a priest on December 1, 1984. He was

assigned to various parishes in the Bronx and Manhattan before being sent to the Gregorian University in Rome in 1993 to study Canon Law. He was awarded a Doctorate in Canon Law in 1998 and then served briefly as a judge on the Metropolitan Tribunal before being named Pastor of St. Vincent De Paul Church on West 23rd St. in 1998. In 2012 Fr. Murray was named Pastor of Holy Family Church.

Fr. Murray has appeared as a commentator on religious topics on various television and radio outlets, including EWTN, EWTN Spanish, Fox News, Fox Business News, MSNBC, NY1, Radio Maria, Relevant Radio, Fox News Radio and the Voice of America. He is fluent in French, Spanish and Italian. He served in the U.S. Naval Reserve Chaplain Corps from 1994 to 2005.





	FRIDAY, JULY 30		SATURDAY, JULY 31
9:30-11:00	Conference check-in / registration	9:30 AM	Speaker - Monsignor Fernando Felices
10:30 AM	Confessions available	10:30 AM	Refreshment break
11:30 AM	Boxed lunch - optional (pre-purchase required)	11:00 AM	Speaker - Dr. Gianna Emanuela Molla
12:15 PM	Opening Mass - Shrine church dedication anniversary -	11:45 AM	Confessions available
	Main Celebrant His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke	12:15 PM	Holy Mass - Main Celebrant His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke
2:00 PM	Speaker - Father Gerald Murray	1:30 PM	Lunch buffet
3:00 PM	Divine Mercy Chaplet	2:30 PM	Keynote address - His Eminence Raymond
3:30 PM	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Rosary		Leo Cardinal Burke
4:00 PM	Evening Prayer and Benediction of the Blessed	3:30 PM	Holy Hour
	Sacrament	5:00 PM	Concert by Marty Rotella
5:30 PM	Cocktail 1/2 hour - Entertainment by Marty Rotella	5:30 PM	Buffet dinner
6:00 PM	Dinner with honored guests His Eminence Raymond		
	Leo Cardinal Burke, Dr. Gianna Emanuela Molla, Father Gerald Murray, and Monsignor Fernando		SUNDAY, AUGUST 1
	Felices (limited seating – pre-registration required)	9:00 AM	Sunday buffet brunch - optional (pre-purchase required)

REGISTER ONLINE AT: WWW.QUEENOFTHEAMERICASGUILD.ORG



CONFERENCE & DINNER PACKAGE

Includes conference attendance Friday & Saturday, Friday evening gourmet dinner with Cardinal Burke, Dr. Gianna Emanuela Molla, Fr. Gerald Murray, & Msgr. Fernando Felices, Saturday buffet lunch and dinner. Conference & Dinner package is limited to the first 100 registrants.

HOTEL, CONFERENCE & DINNER PACKAGE

Includes all of the above, plus two nights' lodging (Friday and Saturday nights) at the Radisson La Crosse. Based on double occupancy. Limited number of rooms available - rooms held only until June 29. If there will be just one person in the hotel room, please add the additional single supplement charge.

VALUE PACKAGE

Due to the limited seating at the Friday night dinner, we are offering this package, which will allow you to attend all conference activities on both days, excluding the Friday dinner. Includes conference attendance on Friday (excluding dinner) and Saturday, buffet lunch and dinner.

OPTIONS

We will also be offering an optional boxed lunch on Friday and buffet breakfast on Sunday; reservations are required. Please indicate your preference on the registration form. Due to food ordering requirements, no refunds will be given after July 20.



WWW.QUEENOFTHEAMERICASGUILD.ORG | 630-584-1822

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Name(s):	YES!
(If multiple names, please attach list)	I would like to attend the
Address:	conference July 30 & 31, 2021. _
City:	Cancellation
State: Zip:	
Tel. #: ()	be given on the hotel portion after June 29. All other
E-mail:	cancellations will be refunded only if notification is
	received by July 20.
PACKAGE OPTIONS	Directions
Item # Attending Price/pp Total	The Shrine's physical address is 5250 Justin Road,
Conference & Dinner \$120.00	La Crosse, WI 54601. From I-90, exit onto US-53 S via exit 3 towards La Crosse. US-53 becomes 3 rd Street South, which becomes South Avenue, then Mormon Coulee Road. Watch for signs for Hwys
Value Package (no Friday dinner) \$70.00	
Hotel, Conference	
& Dinner Package* \$285.00	14/61. 14/61 turns left (east). Justin Road is the third
Single Hotel Room Supplement \$165.00	road on the right. Take Justin Road south until you
Sunday Buffet Breakfast \$23.00	— see the Shrine sign on the right.
Friday Box Lunch \$14.00	Send registration form with payment to: Rebecca Nichols
Please choose:	Mational Coordinator, Queen of the Americas Guild 311 Kautz Rd., St. Charles, IL 60174
	Phone: (630) 584-1822 Fax: (630) 587-2200 E-mail: staff@queenoftheamericasguild.org
TOTAL DUE:	REGISTER ONLINE AT
PAYMENT OPTIONS	www.queenoftheamericasguild.org
☐ Enclosed is my check in the amount of: ☐ Charge my	y desired package to my credit card
\$(fill out inf	formation below)
Please make checks payable to: Queen of the Americas Guild	
Please circle:	
Visa MasterCard Discover Amex Expiration	date
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Name on card 3- or 4-dig	it security code.
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Our Lady of Guadalupe -

Guide and Intercessor in Witnessing to the Gospel





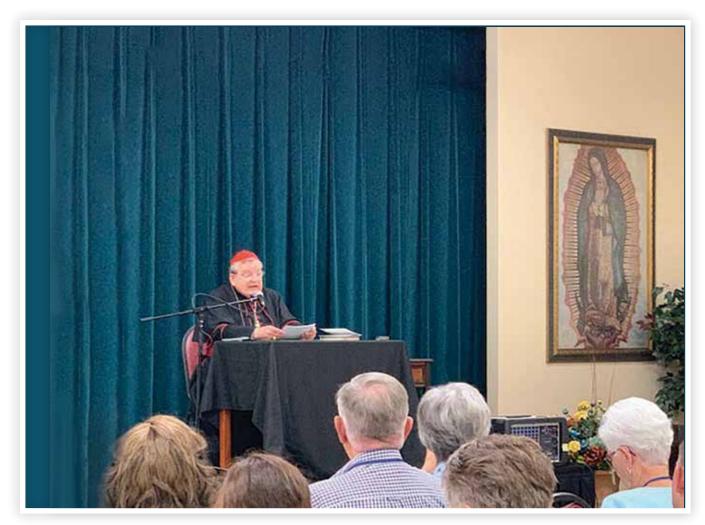
Cathy and Austin Ruse, Dr. Robert Royal, and Dr. Elizabeth Mitchell visit during Friday's cocktail hour.

The 14th annual Queen of the Americas Guild conference was held at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe on July 26 & 27, 2019.

His Eminence, Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke officially began the conference by celebrating the opening Mass at the beautiful Shrine church. After Mass, as always, His Eminence graciously took the time to greet and chat with all attendees. Especially impressive is that he has an infallible memory for names, greeting all those he has met before with friendly familiarity.

After a quick break for lunch, the conference began with our first speaker, Cathleen Ruse. Mrs. Ruse serves as the Family Research Council's Senior Fellow for Legal Studies. With her great experience in the complicated legal areas of abortion, bioethics, and family, religious liberty, pornography, and free speech, Cathy was particularly qualified to speak to our conference theme. Her talk, "The Best Hope Against the New Transgender Crusade," was very compelling and well received. After the fascinating first talk, pilgrims spent a calming hour with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Rosary, followed by evening prayer and Benediction.

The evening festivities began with a cocktail hour back at the Pilgrim Center. Long-time conference Master of Ceremonies Marty Rotella gave a beautiful piano performance while pilgrims enjoyed each other's company. A delicious gourmet dinner followed at Culina Mariana Café, where all of our guest speakers joined Cardinal Burke and the pilgrims who had registered for this in-demand event. His Eminence gave a lovely blessing, and after dinner, he visited each and every table for a quick chat.



Cardinal Burke delivers his keynote address.

Saturday's busy schedule began with an address by Dr. Robert Royal, an accomplished Catholic author and president of the Faith and Reason Institute, based in Washington, D.C., and editor-in-chief of the online publication, *The Catholic Thing*. Dr. Royal's address was titled "From the Beginning: How Evangelizing Led to the Creation of the Americas and Can Continue that Mission Today." His thought-provoking talk left pilgrims with a new passion for fully participating in the New Evangelization.

Another beautiful Mass was celebrated by His Eminence Cardinal Raymond Burke, followed by an enjoyable lunch buffet for all conference participants. Following lunch, pilgrims were treated to a talk by Austin Ruse, a conservative political activist, journalist and author. He serves as the President of the Center for Family and Human Rights, also known as C-FAM, a U.S.-based research institute/think tank and conservative, pro-life NGO. Mr. Ruse's

talk was titled "No Finer Time to be a Faithful Catholic," and his talk left conference participants in complete agreement.

Cardinal Burke's keynote address is always the highlight of our conference, and this year was no exception. His Eminence spoke on "Our Lady of Guadalupe, Guide and Intercessor in Times of Turmoil," a fitting topic for these times, indeed. The complete text of his talk can be found on pages 5-11.

After Holy Hour in the Shrine Church, Marty Rotella performed a lovely and lively pre-dinner concert in the church crypt area. This has always been a favorite and much-requested part of the conference, and a joyous way to end our two-day retreat.

We hope you will consider joining us for our next conference; details can be found on pages 14-17. ■

"Why, Why, Why?"

By Bro. Paschal Kolodziej, OFM, Conv.

Reprinted with permission of Immaculata Magazine



o you ever find yourself asking "why?" in the face of human suffering?

- A 39-year-old wife and mother of three children dying from an inoperable brain tumor.
- A 35-year-old Franciscan nun stricken with rheumatoid arthritis, and now crippled for over 30 years at the age of 69.
- A 40-year-old man dying of cancer. He died on his 25th wedding anniversary, the exact date.

These are just a few of the cases that I have come across in my 28 years of nursing. These cases and others have prompted me at times to ask, "Why?" Why is there suffering? What purpose does it serve?

In my search to answer these questions, I read Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter, On the Meaning of Suffering. The letter begins with the same question and admits it is difficult to answer.

Man asks why of God, knowing he is the Lord of the universe. Often the question leads to frustration. This struggle between man and God can even "obscure the image of God," says the holy Father, and sometimes lead us to deny the very existence of a loving God. The apostolic letter gives us the example of Job as a way to unravel the mystery of suffering. Job was a righteous man yet experienced intense calamity. His wife even encouraged him to curse God.

But Job would not curse. The Holy Father says Job's "suffering is the suffering of someone who is innocent; it must be accepted as mystery, which the individual is unable to penetrate completely by his own intelligence."

Therefore, the question of "Why is there suffering?" cannot be answered in a purely human way. It demands faith. Every mystery demands faith!

The Holy Father explains that all of our answers are inadequate until we enter into Christ: "Jesus causes us to enter into the mystery and to discover the 'why' of suffering, as far as we are capable of grasping the sublimity of divine love."

Jesus Christ is love personified. The fullest answer to the question of suffering is the Cross. Love held Jesus to the cross, not the nails. He took upon himself the punishment for sin, to save mankind from sin's

dominion. He voluntarily took upon himself incredible agony in loving response to the Father's will: "If this cup cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

Jesus' words and actions help us to understand "the similarity between every human anguish and the anguish of the God-man." Christ raised human suffering to the level of the Redemption. And so each person can be a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ.

Suffering can draw us closer to Christ and can, through a special grace, engender heroism. The Holy Father writes, "When this body is gravely ill and the person is almost incapable of living and acting, all the more do interior maturity and spiritual greatness become evident, constituting a touching lesson to those who are healthy and normal."

Suffering can change a person, leading him to a deeper conversion in configuration with Christ. Suffering clears the way for grace to transform the soul. When borne with love and offered back as a gift to the Father, suffering transforms not just the soul of the person suffering, but of those who are working to build up the Body of Christ.

Understanding the mystery of our trials in this way, we see that suffering is a call from Christ; it is a vocation. It is service in the true example of Jesus.

It is serving, like Jesus, for the salvation of his brothers and sisters.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Archbishop Jose Gomez

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe,
Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas.
We fly to you today as your beloved children.
We ask you to intercede for us with your Son,
As you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother,
And gain for our nation and world,
And for all our families and loved ones,
The protection of your holy angels,
That we may be spared the worst of this illness.

For those already afflicted,
We ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance.
Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful,
Wipe away their tears and help them to trust.

In this time of trial and testing,

Teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to

be patient and kind.

Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and

to our hearts.



The true image of Our Lady of Guadalupe at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico City



Saint Joseph the Workman, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe – La Crosse, Wisconsin



St. Joseph the Workman

at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe – La Crosse, Wisconsin



This article is the third in a series highlighting the devotional areas at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The following information appears on the Shrine's website at www.guadalupeshrine.org.

ather Anthony Brankin, of the Archdiocese of Chicago, was commissioned by the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe to create a unique bronze sculpture for the outdoor St. Joseph the Workman devotional area. This work, one of Father Brankin's largest, took more than a year to conceptualize and create. The final finishing and addition of the fine patina was completed only days before the sculpture was delivered to the Shrine.

Originally conceived to be a bronze statue of St. Joseph the Workman, the commission decided it would be important to emphasize St. Joseph's foster fatherhood of Christ. The portrayal of Joseph was to include all his qualities that enabled him to love, protect, and teach the boy Jesus as He grew in wisdom, age, and grace in Nazareth, as well as to portray those same qualities in St. Joseph that modern fathers must aspire to, showing that St. Joseph is both their patron and their model.

"We wanted to indicate in the final composition that tenderness and strength are not qualities arrayed in opposition to one another in a male, but rather to be found in abundance and together in the most manly of men and fatherly of fathers." – Father Anthony Brankin

The bronze depicts a humble scene in Nazareth where the carpenter Joseph is shown happily teaching the boy Jesus how to work with wood. Jesus and Joseph glance at each other with peaceful smiling looks – reflecting their quiet love and admiration for each other.

In order to establish some ironic drama, Jesus and Joseph have lashed together two planks of wood; they fashioned a cross. Indeed, a premonition of the future seizes Mary; thus, she is seen gasping, putting her hand to her mouth. The bronze also shows the Archbishop and viewers, who are in prayer before Mary at the entrance to the home, turning their heads toward Jesus and Joseph in this quiet revelation of His most Merciful Death. Once again it is shown that Devotion to Mary, as always, leads to her Son.

Unlike many artists, Father Brankin sculpts the heads first, in order to be constantly aware of the presence of the subject and to be inspired early on. Father Brankin likes to think that the figure he is sculpting is right there with him to guide his hand and to encourage his labors. When the sculptor steps back, "The eyes of the figures seem to cast just the right glance and the fingers curl just so!" Then he adds, "Oh, that sends a cheer to my heart and a tear to my eye. And I know that I am as near to heaven as I can be on earth."

Father Brankin says God has given art to humanity so that he might be able to participate with and anticipate the inexpressible joys of heaven. "Without words, and more surely than with them, art communicates God −His Knowability, His Essence, His Attributes." ■



Pilgrimage Memories

By Leif Arvidson





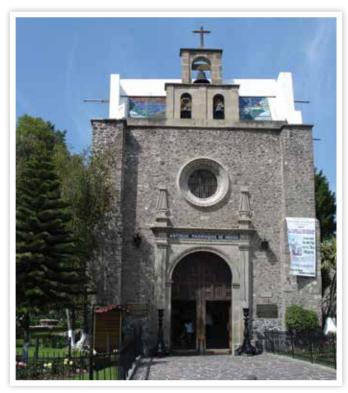
s many of us remain cooped up inside our homes awaiting the end of the coronavirus lockdown, we look forward to the day when we can freely move about and travel again. At the Queen of the Americas Guild, we particularly look forward to a special sort of travel – pilgrimage, a journey to a sacred place. Recent thoughts have taken me back to happy memories of pilgrimages to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. To bring back memories for those of you who have been blessed to make this pilgrimage before, and for those of you who may be inspired to make your first pilgrimage, here are some highlights from the Shrine and the surrounding area.

Naturally, a major highlight of every pilgrimage is the Sacred Tilma. When you enter the Basilica, you are immediately drawn to the Tilma. Although it is nearly five centuries old, its colors still look bold and vibrant. From almost any vantage point in the Basilica, you can gaze upon the Tilma and ponder the miracle of Our Lady's image. For a closer look, pilgrims are afforded an opportunity to walk directly below the Tilma, a truly inspiring experience.

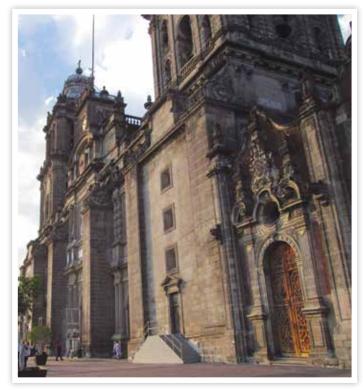
Pilgrims also walk up Tepeyac Hill, tracing the footsteps of Saint Juan Diego. Following the Virgin of Guadalupe's direction, the good Saint hiked to the top of the hill and found a miraculous assortment of glistening flowers in full bloom in the middle of winter. Numerous lovely rose bushes are still thriving on Tepeyac Hill today.

Just below Tepeyac Hill, pilgrims can visit the Chapel of the Indians. When Our Lady appeared and spoke about God, she told Juan Diego, "I want very much to have a sacred little house built here for me, in which I will show Him, I will exalt Him and make Him manifest." A wall of the original chapel that was built in response to Our Lady's request still stands within the Chapel of the Indians. A crucifix also marks the area where Saint Juan Diego lived next to the chapel, so that he could greet pilgrims and tell them the story of Our Lady's apparition.

Outside of the Shrine grounds, pilgrims can also visit the Church of Santiago in Tlatelolco, where Juan Diego was walking to when Our Lady appeared to him. In the early 1500s, an enormous temple that stood nearby was taken down and the stones from the temple were used to build this towering church. It is said that gold and jewels that had been placed at the foundation of the temple were later used to fund the building of the church. Inside, pilgrims can still see the large stone baptismal font where Saint Juan Diego himself was baptized. Tens of thousands of other Native Americans were likely baptized at that font, too, as the Faith quickly took root in the Americas.



Chapel of the Indians



Metropolitan Cathedral

In the city center, pilgrims visit the magnificent Metropolitan Cathedral of Mexico City, Latin America's oldest and largest cathedral. The Spanish Conquistador Hernando Cortez ordered the construction of the original cathedral; they even say that he laid the first stone. On a pilgrimage led by Cardinal Raymond Burke, my section of the group was blocked from entering the crypt of the Cathedral. However, Cardinal Burke soon appeared and said, "Follow me." He led us through crypt hallways to a large opening, where we found the tomb of Bishop Juan de Zumarraga. You will recall that Our Lady sent Juan Diego to Bishop Zumarraga to request that a church be built.

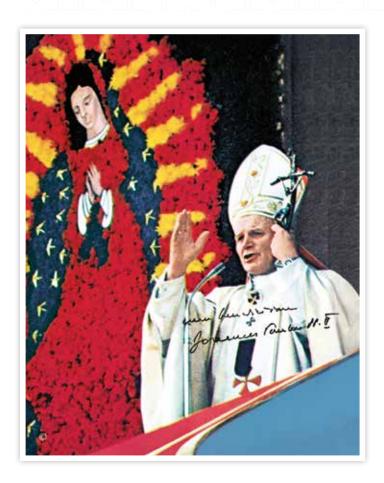
In yet another bustling part of Mexico City, you will find the Jesuit Church of the Holy Family, which houses the Shrine of Blessed Miguel Pro. Father Miguel used to offer Holy Mass in this church. Pilgrims are able to pray near his remains, which are held in a coffer inside the church. You can also walk through the streets near the church, where Blessed Miguel secretly ministered to the Mexican faithful. You can imagine his courageous determination as he proclaimed, "Viva Cristo Rey," or "Long live Christ the King."

As we wait for the world to open up again, it is consoling to remember inspiring pilgrimages from the past. It provides hope as we anticipate opportunities for the future. Keep an eye on the Guild website for future plans for exciting and edifying pilgrimages to Mexico City.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Fr Shenan J. Bouquet

First published by Human Life International at www.hli.org, 12/11/17. Republished with permission.



"Our gods of wealth, pleasure, and independence demand so much blood in exchange for their poisonous gifts."

Tomorrow we commemorate the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Our Lady has appeared many times to many different people in many different parts of the world. But, of all the many apparitions, in one alone does she appear as a pregnant mother. In the revered miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Blessed Mother contains within her womb the Christ child—the Incarnate Word.

In 1999, St. Pope John Paul II gave a great gift to the Catholic Church and the pro-life movement when he formally declared Our Lady of Guadalupe Patroness of the Americas, the Empress of Latin America,

and the Protectress of Unborn Children. He also designated December 12—the day of Our Lady's last appearance to Juan Diego, and the same day he unfurled his humble cloak, imprinted with the miraculous image of Our Lady, before the astonished eyes of his bishop—as her feast day. "Under her motherly care I place ... the innocent lives of children, especially those who are in danger of not being born," John Paul II said in a homily during his apostolic visit to Mexico in January of 1999. "I entrust the cause of life to her loving protection: may no Mexican dare to harm the precious and sacred gift of life in its mother's womb!" Sadly, the violent crime against the dignity of human life returned to Mexico in 2007 when abortion was decriminalized in the Federal State. Since its inauguration, over 150,000 children have been sacrificed in the name of choice and freedom.

Before John Paul II's declaration, Fr. Paul Marx had already selected Our Lady of Guadalupe as the patroness for Human Life International. This was an "obvious" choice, Fr. Marx wrote. "Her reverence and tenderness communicate to us the joy and awe with which we must approach each nascent life." Fr. Marx directly attributed the astonishing growth of HLI to the miraculous intervention of Our Lady.

A HUMBLE INSTRUMENT

According to Aztec scholars, at the height of their empire, the Aztecs sacrificed tens of thousands of victims every single year. Children were routinely among the victims. The testimony of European eyewitnesses is so horrifying that one hesitates even to quote their words. "They strike open the wretched Indian's chest with flint knives and hastily tear out the palpitating heart which, with the blood, they present to the idols, "wrote conquistador Bernal Diaz. Then they would cannibalize their victims.

Our Lady, however, had different plans for this continent and its peoples. Of all the many people she could have chosen to carry out this plan, she selected a poor, uneducated peasant. This is Mary's way. Think of Lourdes, of Fatima, of Banneux. In each case Mary bypassed the rich and the powerful, and hand-picked the poor and the lowly-often mere children.

As the archangel Gabriel once appeared to the poor, young, unknown wife of a carpenter in a tiny town in Nazareth with a

mission of cosmic significance, so Mary appeared to Juan Diego, entrusting to this humble instrument a mission that would, in less than a decade, convert millions of souls to the worship of her Son, and end the scourge of human sacrifice.

How different was the new religion from the old, and how different Mary's maternal and loving message from that of the blood-lust of the Aztec gods! "No longer," wrote Fr. Marx in the late 90s, "did the people need to cower in abject terror before the bloodthirsty gods who demanded the death of their children—the destruction of their families. They found refuge beneath the gracious protection of a gentle Mother."

Mary spoke comforting and compassionate words to Juan Diego. "Am I not here, I who am your mother?" she asked Diego, when she met him as he hurried to find a priest for his dying uncle, who was miraculously cured, as she promised. "I am the merciful Mother," she said, "the 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."

THE BLOODTHIRSTY GODS OF THE 21st CENTURY

How great is our need for the comforting, maternal hand of Our Lady of Guadalupe now! For in our age, the bloodthirsty spirits of the Aztec gods have arisen anew. Yes, the gods have taken new shapes and new names, but the blood-lust is the same.

"In ever greater numbers," wrote Fr. Marx, "society sacrifices our young and aged at demonic altars, hurrying them to destruction through abortion, sex education, prostitution, pornography, infanticide, and euthanasia; foolishly believing that just a little more contraception, just one additional population control program, and we will be blessed with the happiness and peace that we so desire."

We shudder as we read the descriptions of the Aztec sacrifices. And yet, every day sacrifices of equal barbarity are conducted in every major city in every Western country, with the full endorsement of the law, and even paid for by our tax dollars. Accounts of Aztec parents voluntarily delivering their children to the knives of the priests curdle our blood—and yet so many mothers and fathers do the exact same now.

Would Bernal Diaz have been any less horrified by this coldly clinic testimony of late-term abortionist Leroy Carhart, describing how he conducts his late abortions? He tries, he says, "to take the fetus out either foot or skull first, whatever end I can get to first," then grasps "the portion that you can get a hold of" at which point he "dismember[s] the shoulder or the hip or whatever it would be." "Is the fetus still alive?" someone asks Carhart at this point. "Yes," Carhart responds coolly. "I know that the fetus is alive during the

process most of the time because I can see the fetal heartbeat on the ultrasound."

TRUST IN OUR LADY

Like Juan Diego, we now live in a world in which child sacrifice is embedded deeply in the substructures of our culture. Our gods of wealth, pleasure, and independence demand so much blood in exchange for their poisonous gifts. And like Juan Diego, we may be tempted to wonder what we can possibly do to make a difference, to assume that the case is hopeless. Are we not too weak, too uneducated, too far from the centers of power, too few? We will remain faithful, sure, but we cannot possibly hope to win this fight. The odds are against us. The age of miracles is past.

Fr. Marx addressed this fear. Our Lady of Guadalupe, he said, is the solution. Turn to her. "In contemplating her simplicity we find the strength to emulate her faith," he said, "and proceed with confidence in the knowledge that God will overcome the seemingly insurmountable barriers looming over the world today."

It is quite true that we cannot hope to win this fight. But if, like Juan Diego, we submit ourselves humbly to our Lady, and to ask her to use us as her humble instruments, miracles will happen! "Am I not here, I, who am your Mother?" says Our Lady to us, as she said to Juan Diego. "Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not the source of your joy? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do you need anything more? Let nothing else worry you, disturb you."

We Christians are called to be leaven in the very heart of society. We cannot rest content because we feel there is little we can do to change the course of everyday life and entrenched anti-life mindsets. God will multiply enormously the effect of our small offering of work, prayer, and initiatives.

Let us, like Juan Diego, obey our Blessed Mother in the little things, as well as the big. And let us rely, not upon our own strength, but upon the strength of she who—against all human odds—converted an entire continent to the love of her Son in the space of a few short years. What she accomplished once, she can accomplish again.

"Queen of Apostles accept our complete readiness to work for the restoration and fulfillment of your Son's kingdom. May we not withhold anything at all in helping bring his salvific Will to fruition. May we be completely dedicated to the cause of the Gospel and of ultimate peace in the world. May our struggle be firmly grounded on justice, and be a stimulus for reciprocal charity among men and women and all nations." — St. Pope John Paul II, January 27, 1979

Our Lady of Guadalupe: pray for us! ■

