

Reflection Tuesday 2nd Week Advent Our Lady of Guadalupe 2023

The shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, near Mexico City, is one of the most celebrated places of pilgrimage in North America. On December 9th 1531, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to an Indian convert, Juan Diego, and left with him a picture of herself impressed upon his cloak. Devotion to Mary under this title has continually increased, and today she is the Patroness of the Americas.

Juan Diego's feast day was yesterday, the feast of our Lady today is the reason for this. During Advent we are reminded that Jesus came to us because Mary agreed to become his mother and give birth to him for us. She encouraged Juan Diego to ask for a shrine to be built for her in Mexico. It became a watershed of people being baptised in Mexico and the Americas and Mary continues to inspire and encourage them. Like the loving mother that Mary is, she constantly brings people together, inspires faith and promotes the presence of her Son in our lives. It is her warmth, gentleness and kindness that inspires us. She also wants us to experience the presence of her Son as she did because her son's presence strengthened, inspired, encouraged, and motivated her life and she wishes us to have that same grace filled experience.

Pope Francis: *When Our Lady appeared to Saint Juan Diego, her face was that of a woman of mixed blood, a mestiza, and her garments bore many symbols of the native culture. Like Jesus, Mary is close to all her sons and daughters; as a concerned mother, she accompanies them on their way through life. She shares all the joys and hopes, the sorrows and troubles of God's people made up of men and women of every race and nation. The image of the Virgin on the tilma of Juan Diego was the prophecy of an embrace: Mary's embrace of all the peoples of the Americas... Mary's embrace showed that America – North and South – is called to be a land where different peoples come together; a land prepared to accept human life at every stage, from the mother's womb to old age; a land which welcomes immigrants, and the poor and the marginalized, in every age. A land of generosity.*

Let us also be a people with this generosity! Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.