

Homily  
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
December 12, 2023

"Am I not here, I who am your mother?"

These are the words Juan Diego heard in his fourth encounter with Our Lady of Guadalupe when he was delayed in meeting with her at her request. Several miracles are attributed to Our Lady's intervention during her several visits to Juan Diego. The local bishop did not believe Juan's encounter and sought proof, which came in the appearance of flowers indigenous to Spain and present during winter on top of Tepeyac Hill as well as the imprint of our Lady on Juan's cloak or tilma. And, Juan's uncle, who's near-death illness kept Juan from meeting Our Lady as scheduled, miraculously recovered fully.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We remember that Jesus selected His Mother, our Mother, to be the Ark of His incarnate entry into our world. We remember that God has selected us to be His voice in this world. We are all in this together, working together, supporting each other.

Mary instructed Juan to have a church erected in her honor on the spot of their initial meeting. This isn't so that we can worship Mary, but so that Mary can direct us to her Son, our very Brother. We come to Mary as our spiritual mother for her intercession. She is the Mother of Mercy, the Ark of the New Covenant, the one who said, "Yes," to God's invitation.

Our first reading tells us of the heavenly appearance of the child destined for the throne next to God, born of a woman, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.

Our Gospel recounts Mary's visitation to Elizabeth and Elizabeth's declaration of Mary as Mother of our Lord. Mary's response is to glorify God.

I'm reminded of our Bishop's pontifical motto, "In all things, give thanks." That means in all our blessings and in all our struggles, give thanks. God has a plan; we may not understand it or even appreciate it, but when we align our will to His Will, when we keep our focus on our Lord and Savior, when we follow Mary who directs us to her Son, we can't help but to experience joy and peace. This is what this season of Advent is all about, seeking Jesus at His coming. This is why Mary came to Juan Deigo and instructed him to build the church. This is why we celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is responsible for the conversion of the indigenous in droves and inspires us to this day. Today we remember those who are persecuted; we remember those who have left the church out of fear and misunderstanding; we remember ourselves as we continue our faith journey toward the One Mary points us towards; we continue to proclaim the Good News in courage and faith. And we hope for the salvation promised us by her Son.