

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Mary for Everyone **Our Lady of Guadalupe** Friday, December 12, 2014 8:15 AM
Zec 2:14-17; Lk 1:26-38 (In each case whenever there is an authentic apparition it is responding to a dire situation.)

Today we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and Guadalupe is the first and in a way **the most important of all the so-called apparitions of the Blessed Mother**. By apparition is meant the appearance to some people or to one person of the Blessed Mother.

Now it is presumed that the apparitions of the Blessed Mother are utterly unique in the sense that other saints don't appear; Jesus and the Blessed Mother only have appeared at various times. **Only nine of them are actually approved**. Let me explain to you what it means to say they are approved. It means **there's nothing contrary to the teachings of the Church about them**, and nothing doubtful, and nothing suspicious. It doesn't mean actually the Church knows for sure that the Blessed Mother appeared, or Jesus. It just means there's nothing suspicious, doubtful, or wrong about the apparitions, or about what they say.

Having said that, I will point out that the apparitions at Medjugorje that many people believe to be authentic have never been approved by the Church. Why is this? I don't know, but there must be something because **Pope John Paul** was very, very devoted to the Blessed Mother, and yet he **refused to approve of the apparitions at Medjugorje**. So there must be something suspicious or something unsound or odd about either the messages or the people who are the messengers, or how they behaved afterwards. I don't know.

However, **in regard to Guadalupe there's no such doubt**—there's no such doubt. The actual people involved were all of the highest caliber in terms of moral character and spirituality, although they were all very humble people.

Now one of the issues of many apparitions is that all the recipients of the apparition, all those who are called in this way, are **very humble people**, and because they are humble they are also not very educated and sometimes what they say, although never against what the Church teaches, may sound quite odd or unschooled or even simplistic. **So it is our job to see through the outward form of these messages into the inner meaning**. The inner meaning of the apparition of Guadalupe is that **Mary wants to care for all those who suffer**. It's the same message as the message of Jesus himself in the New Testament. God wants to care for all who suffer, wants to be the support for people who are burdened, who

are poor, who are sick. In other words, God is on our side; Mary is on our side, wants to help and extend her blessings to all. This of course is what we would expect from the one who bore Jesus into the world.

You might ask the question however: **Why did God go to this extreme case of actually sending Mary to Mexico** shortly after the beginning of the Reformation, shortly after the conquest of Mexico? Well, the reason was of course that the Catholics, **the Spanish conquistadors, did not act in a very Christian way.** They killed many and enslaved many. This is not the message of the gospel. They brought friars with them and the friars tried their best to help the native populations, but were not able to do so that much because of the authorities sent by the Spanish king. Their role was to exploit, rob, control these native peoples for the profit of the Spanish crown. So we have to realize **it was an extremely deplorable situation, otherwise such an extraordinary remedy would not have been resorted to.**

Now you might note there are only **nine approved apparitions** in the whole history of the Church. This is the first one, and fruit of it has been a tremendous missionary effort in Mexico and Latin America. There is one apparition approved in Ireland. There are two in Belgium in actually the twentieth century, right before the World War II, and quite a few in France, including the famous one of Lourdes, one in Portugal. Now **each one of these follows some dire situation.** The several in France of course follow the dire situation of the French Revolution that tried to actually eradicate Christianity. So in each case whenever there is an authentic apparition it is responding to a dire situation. Even those not yet approved of sometimes appeared in dire situations. So **they are a way of God responding to us,** to our needs, in ways that we simply cannot do. And those who are called to receive these apparitions have always been **people who are devout and humble.** Again, emphasizing that **God can do great things if we are devout enough and humble enough to let him.**

One final note, when the Blessed Mother appeared **at Guadalupe she appeared** not as a Jewess, not as a white woman, but **as an Indian, and she spoke the Indian dialect.** The message is clear: **the mother of God is a combination of all races and all languages.** She is really for everyone.