

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

God's Care **Our Lady of Guadalupe** Tuesday, December 12, 2017 8:15 AM Rv
11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; Lk 1:39-47 (She is Indian and she is wearing the clothes of a
pregnant woman according to Indian custom, and that itself speaks volumes.)

Today we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Now the apparition at Guadalupe, at least what people claim was the apparition at Guadalupe, occurred in 1531. The sixteenth century was not a very nice century from the standpoint of the Christian gospel. From the time of the apostles the Church's life ebbed and flowed, rose and sank in various times and places. But **the sixteenth-century was a low point almost everywhere**. In Europe friends were tearing themselves to pieces over issues of the **Reformation**. Families were being divided, countries set against each other. In the **New World**, so to speak, it was new to Europe; it wasn't really new. There were all kinds of people here already, millions, **millions of people living**, not necessarily in peace either, **very often at odds with each other**.

But the coming of the Europeans was surely not a blessing. **The Europeans took land, enslaved people, and spread disease**, that latter part not deliberately; they just happened to have immunities that the natives did not have. So the result was **great death, imprisonment, sadness, destruction**. And of course **Catholic missionaries came along with the conquistadors and were seen to be basically partners in crime**. So this was a very dire situation. It is hard to believe that there was any solution at all.

And then out of the blue an apparition, a lady identifying herself as the Mother of God and telling a poor Indian messenger that **she, being the Mother of God, was concerned for all her children**. This of course is a reference to John's Gospel where Jesus gives his disciples to Mary in the person of John, or the beloved disciple, if you prefer that term. And the result of this remarkable event was **the conversion of vast numbers of native people**. And not only their conversion to the Christian gospel but **their belief that God really cares about them**. This was

the message of the woman that God really cares about them **and wants to intercede in their behalf, showering them with mercy and compassion.**

So this really was a remarkable event, and it is hard to dismiss it as a mere figment of some Indian's imagination, especially when **there is a sign involved.** According to the story, and there are many witnesses to this, the Indian brought in roses, and ironically **Castilian roses**, to the bishop as a sign that this really was from God, and then **inside the tilma this image, which you can still see today in Mexico, of the Virgin of Guadalupe.** And interestingly enough she is Indian, not Jewish, but **Indian and she is wearing the clothes of a pregnant woman according to Indian custom, and that itself speaks volumes.**