

MORNING MEDITATION

Our Lady of Guadalupe

**Duplicity does not please God, and to be truly simple,
we ought to have no aim but Himself.**

(Saint Vincent de Paul)

Zechariah 2:14-17

The prophet Zechariah around 520 B.C. spoke to the people who had returned from exile in Babylon about the need for kindness, compassion and social justice; Proclaimed hope for better and peaceful days and promised that God would save his people by sending a "Messiah". This excerpt calls people to rejoice because, he says, God will dwell among his people again.

Judith 13:18-19

**Blessed are you daughter, by the most high God,
Above all women on earth;
and blessed be the Lord God,
The creator of heaven and earth.**

Luke 1:26-38

This excerpt tells us about the visit of angel Gabriel to Mary with the great news of the birth of Jesus: "You have found favor with God and you shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus...." Gabriel assured her that it was through the power of the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child and that "nothing is impossible with God". Mary surrendered and said to Gabriel, "I am the maidservant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say". Mary was called to surrender to God's word and that's our call today!

Mary trusted and surrendered to God's word and God's word became flesh in her. God's word comes to us today through the Scriptures, through lived experiences of many people, through our own personal experiences and through many events and situations. We are called to be sensitive, docile, available and attentive to God's word and let God's word become flesh in our life.

It was in simple faith that Mary accepted the angel's message. She accepted it without full knowledge and with troubled heart and fearful spirit. Luke tells us that Mary did not understand, but she pondered and wondered. Mary has become a model for all believers.

Like Mary, we must wonder and ponder and doubt and believe and trust our way through life's many challenges, troubles, fears, anxieties and uncertainties.

Saint of the day, December 12 - Our Lady of Guadalupe and 14 other saints are remembered this day.

On December 9, The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego, a poor and humble Catholic Aztec who was on his way to Mass that morning. She appeared to him on Tepayac Hill, a place where the Aztecs practiced human sacrifice to appease the fearsome mother god Tonantzin. Our Lady sent Juan Diego to the bishop to relay a request that he build a Church for her son Jesus on that exact spot. On December 12, 1531, after the bishop failed to believe him outright and wanted a sign, Blessed Mary imprinted her image as a pregnant Aztec princess on the inside of Juan Diego's tilma. The bishop and those with him immediately believed and built a church on the spot.

The Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe is located in present day Mexico City. Mary's image on the tilma sent a message to the natives that instead of human sacrifice to the false God Tonantzin, Jesus sacrificed himself out of love for them. She became their mother, a mother of love, compassion, and healing. Because of this miracle, within seven years, eight million native Mexicans converted to Catholicism. Let us not forget also that on the same day, December 12, while Juan Diego was completing his mission with the bishop, Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego's uncle, Juan Bernadino, healed him of grave illness, and revealed her name to him, "the ever-Virgin Saint Mary of Guadalupe." Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patron saint of the Americas.

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