

Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Protector of the Unborn--Feast Day: December 12

When we learn about the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe we learn two important lessons. We learn about faith and we learn about understanding other people.

After Christopher Columbus discovered America, Spanish soldiers called conquistadors came to Mexico to conquer the country and make it part of the Spanish Empire. Missionaries came to Mexico with the conquistadors. The missionaries wanted to share the Word of God with the newly discovered people to 'spread the Word through all the nations' as Christ instructed. They weren't very successful at first.

After thirty years, only a few hundred Native Mexicans, called Aztecs, had converted to the Christian faith. No-one was sure if the natives didn't understand the new teachings because it was so different from their gods, or whether the Mexicans didn't like the conquistadors and so disliked the missionaries that came with them. Human sacrifice, in which the blood of infants was often spilled to make their false gods happy, was still practiced secretly. Into this darkness, Jesus' own mother appeared to humble Juan Diego, one of the few Christian converts! She came as a merciful Mother! Miracles occurred! Roses grew on a frozen hillside, Juan's uncle was miraculously cured and most importantly—Mary's beautiful image appeared on Juan's mantle. This miracle alone, taught the Mexican people more about the Truth and beauty of Christ's teaching than the missionaries had in the last years. Within a short time, six million Native Mexicans were baptized as Christians.

From this wonderful story, and the fact that the devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe is as strong as ever, we learn about our faith. It is clear that God has chosen Mary, the Blessed Virgin, to lead us to Jesus, her son. We also learn something from the apparition itself. Mary appeared to Juan Diego not as a European madonna but as a beautiful Aztec princess speaking to him in his own Aztec language. Christ and Christianity are for all peoples for all ages.

By imitating Our Lady of Guadalupe's respect for life from the moment of conception can we hope to inherit Life itself. Under her gentle direction we find not only shelter and rest, but confidence and strength to go forth and to battle the evil of abortion, euthanasia and other immoral behaviors.