



A Reflection on Our Lady of Guadalupe

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe or Our Lady of Guadalupe is an inspiration in my life. I have known her in a personal way since my late teen years when a car accident took the life of two of my friends and left me with injuries. My physical recuperation took some months, during which time I remember spending hours admiring Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe's face and telling her what was in my heart and mind. The importance of this time was that through my prayers I felt her intercession, care, and protection. I was sure the Lady of Guadalupe saw me and sat with me in the silence, suffering, doubts, and vulnerability. The Lady of Guadalupe looked at me with the desire for connection that only a mother

could have for her beloved child. She looked at me with a fixed look as if she wanted not to lose details about my words, sufferings, and hopes.

With faith and curiosity, I began to read about the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Juan Diego, a native American man. I learned that at the time of her apparitions the native Americans of Mexico lived in constant anxiety, fear, and despair. It was hard for the native Americans to believe that the New God brought by the Spaniards was a God of love because on one hand the Spaniards had the Bible and its principles of love, unity, and forgiveness; on the other hand, Spaniards had the sword that brought with it war, abuse, and

injustice to native Americans. The apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe showed that she was consistent with her words and actions. Her presence was to evangelize, to make her son known, and to manifest God's love for all. She showed that she came to bring peace and unity. She came to restore the dignity of the people of the New World and the Old World.

Today when I think of the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Juan Diego, I imagine how immediately the connection aroused between them. Juan Diego experienced only a pure attraction to the love that came from heaven and emanated from Our Lady of Guadalupe. Juan Diego looked at Our Lady of Guadalupe

in her representation of a woman of color, and he felt the familiarity of his race and identified with her. Juan Diego was captivated by her beauty, and compassion; and he surrendered and prostrated at her feet. When Juan Diego heard his native language Nahuatl spoken by her, he felt her empathy and solidarity with him and the most vulnerable people. Through the spoken language (Nahuatl), Our Lady of Guadalupe gave voice and power to the voiceless of the time.

Juan Diego was a humble and unpretentious person, without desire for grandeur or headlines in the news of

the time. As Our Lady of Guadalupe looked at him and chose him, she returned his humanity, dignity, and value in the worst circumstances of conquest, domination, violence, and suffering. She loved him no matter what other people thought about him. Juan Diego told Our Lady of Guadalupe, "O Mother of God, please choose another person, more capable and educated, someone considered worthy, and more valuable than me." And she in her motherly tenderness answered him, "There is nobody more valuable, more worthy for me, my beloved son, than you. Never forget that even if everyone tries to take away your dignity, they cannot

because your heart, my beloved son, is mine. Always remember who you are and why I chose you."

Our Lady of Guadalupe spoke the same language of the heart as Juan Diego, the language of love. She reminds us that God does not come for some and leave others behind. Our Lady of Guadalupe came to bring peace and to unite all God's people. She reminds us of God's unconditional love, respect, and empathy for all humankind.

Article by Herlinda Ramirez Machado, CSJ. First appeared through The Leadership Collaborative, December 2022. Used with permission.