

## Homily – Midnight Mass, Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

December 12, 2016

Our Lady is close to each of us on our pilgrim journey on earth, especially to migrants, immigrants, and refugees. Today, the U. S. Catholic bishops have called upon Catholics in this nation to stand in prayer and solidarity with the families of immigrants. We gather in prayer to place before our compassionate Father the hopes, fears, and needs of all those families who have come to this country seeking a better life. They have often fled from violence, injustices, and numbing poverty – often risking their very lives to find a place of justice, safety, and peace for their families.

Mary does not stay comfortably at home in Nazareth. She is constantly on the move, sent forth by God to lead all people to her beloved Son. After being told that she will be the Savior's mother, she visits and helps an older relative who is also pregnant. When she visits Elizabeth, she prays her *Magnificat*. Pope Paul VI pointed out that Mary “did not hesitate to proclaim that God vindicates the humble and the oppressed, and removes the powerful people of the world from their privileged positions.”

A trip to Bethlehem and giving birth to Jesus is followed by a flight into Egypt to flee the violence threatened against her Son. Then a trip home and a journey to Jerusalem to present her Son in the Temple, and annual travels to Jerusalem for the major feasts, a wedding in Cana -- walking with her son on the way to Golgotha. She stands in solidarity with the early Christian community and accompanies the risen Lord's disciples throughout our history.

Pope Francis has pointed out that "Mary was able to turn a stable into a home for Jesus, with poor swaddling clothes and an abundance of love. She is the handmaid of the Father who sings his praises. She is the friend who is ever concerned that wine not be lacking in our lives. She is the woman whose heart was pierced by a sword and who understands all our pain. . . As a true mother, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles, and she constantly surrounds us with God's love" (E.G., 286).

At a unique moment in the history of this American continent God intervened through the Virgin Mary to open up the possibilities for the eventual unity of all peoples. Our Lady, *la Morenita*, is at one with all people, she is the Mother of us all. She promises to be with us, her people, telling us not to fear the darkness, the violence, the

hatred that is so much a part of our world. She is the protector and liberator of the poor, the downtrodden, the neglected, the immigrant and the refugee, the detained and deported, the elder and persons with disabilities, all the children unborn and born!

On this Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, let us sing her *Magnificat* with her. As Pope Francis has said:

The Marian Canticle professes that God . . . lifts up the humble, comes to the aid of the poor and the lowly, fills with goodness, with blessings and hope those who trust in his mercy from generation to generation, while he puts down from their thrones the wealthy, the powerful and the overbearing.

Tonight, let us remember with deep gratitude and affection her visit with St. Juan Diego at Tepeyac and her maternal intimacy with all of us. Let us entrust to her the life of all our peoples – especially migrants, immigrants, and refugees!