

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“The Lady of Guadalupe: A Feast Within Advent”

by Rev. Patrik O’Dea

In 2005, while Director of the Newman Centre, at the University of Toronto, I met Jose Gonsalves, a young man from Mexico, who joined the Campus Ministry Team. Jose had a great love of Our Lady of Guadalupe and I must admit he inspired me to learn more about her. Eventually, I also came to love and appreciate this Special Feast Day. Jose, and another parishioner, asked if I might consider highlighting this feast in a greater and more visible way.

Why this sudden burst of enthusiasm for a feast we rarely celebrate with much attention? Perhaps it is because this student and his friend have provided me with additional insight into how this feast can have greater relevance for our Advent celebrations and preparation for Christmas. The fact this feast just happens to fall in Advent should be enough to make us curious! Yet, it can also speak to our time. Is it not true that perhaps some may assume this feast seems to have relevance only for the peoples of Mexico or South America? Jose thinks not, and I must agree. Perhaps we should remind ourselves of how this feast began.

In the Year 1531, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego, an Aztec convert at Tepeyac, a hill northwest of Mexico City. She questions, “Where are you going?” His life was suddenly disrupted by God through Mary. She invited Juan to ask the bishop to build a church where the prayers of the oppressed, the excluded may be heard; where compassion may be shown to them. The bishop, however, demanded proof, a sign. Mary directed Juan Diego to the top of the hill in order to pick roses; although out of season, he finds them blooming. He is instructed to carry them in his tilma (cloak) to the bishop. As the roses fall to the floor, in front of the bishop, an image of Mary appears on the tilma. It is a sign for the bishop, yet a sign he did not expect.

The image of Mary that appeared has since become for many, a rich symbolism for Advent. Mary the mother of our Lord is represented as an Aztec woman, not of the elite, the privileged but as one of the poor, the excluded, the powerless. The image is evocative of the beautiful verses from both the Old and New Testament. In Zechariah 2: 14-17, we hear, “Sing, rejoice daughter of Zion; for I am coming to dwell in the middle of you.” In Revelation 12:1, we hear, “Now a great sign appeared in heaven; a woman adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with twelve stars on her head for a crown.” Our Lady of Guadalupe’s message can also be seen in the reality of the gospel. In Luke 1: 48-49, we hear, “Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done good things for me. Holy is His name, and His mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear Him.”

In modern times, speaking about this feast, and its significance for Advent, the late Pope Paul VI once remarked: “...(in) approaching Christmas. We all know how much this involves by way of preparation. It is a feast that gives rise to humanitarian thoughts, and feelings of joy and peace. The children, the poor, the unfortunate are in the minds of all. This is one of the most heartening and praiseworthy aspects of our society. It educates us in a spirit of brotherhood, and so to an awareness of the needs of the sufferings of others. We must include in our Christmas planning some genuine reflection on Christ in the manger and a resolution and social renewal. He himself came among us as one who was lowly, humble, poor. At the same time, he was the

Messiah who redeemed us from every moral misery, as well as the prophet of hope of the kingdom of heaven.”

Our Lady of Guadalupe’s message of Christ’s presence among us is not just to Juan Diego, or to the mestizo church which was soon to emerge, or to the Americans but it has significance for all people. Her message does not exclude. That message should continue to challenge us all.

--Fr. Pat



Roses to Our Lady of Guadalupe

In honour of Our Lady of Guadalupe, parishioners are welcome to bring a single rose to place by a special image of her which will be set up in the Sanctuary next weekend



Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 5th, 2015

4:30 p.m. + Margaret Rose Skerry

Sunday, December 6th, 2015

8:00 a.m. + Richard Callan

9:30 a.m. Birthday Wishes for Brian Wong

11:00 a.m. + Pietro Turco

Monday, December 7th, 2015

8:30 a.m. Paul & Connie’s 2nd Anniversary

Tuesday, December 8th, 2015

8:30 a.m. + Bernadette Carvalho

Wednesday, December 9th, 2015

8:30 a.m. + Sister Gloria

Thursday, December 10th, 2015

8:30 a.m. + Thomas Aquinas Kil

Friday, December 11th, 2015

8:30 a.m. Deceased Legionaries

Family of Faith

St. Edward's is joining with other parishes in launching the Family of Faith campaign, to help to address critical priorities that will benefit Catholics all across the Archdiocese.

The Family of Faith will also help our parish, too. For every dollar raised, our parish will receive 25 cents. If we exceed our goal, we will keep 75 cents of every dollar over goal. Our parish goal is \$535,000 (of which 25%, or \$133,750, would come back to us). The priorities for our parish: invest in youth ministry, ministry to seniors, and other ministries, and to upgrade the interior of the church as well as to re-pave the parking lot. Please help us to achieve these priorities by offering a pledge. All parishioners will receive a pledge form in the mail.

All registered parishioners, by now, have received a pledge form in the mail. An update will be offered at all masses this weekend. As we aim to conclude the Family of Faith campaign next weekend, Dec. 13th, please find enclosed an insert which can be used as a guide in offering a pledge.

Heavenly Father

We ask you to be with us as we work together
as a family of faith,
sharing and following the example of your son
Jesus in loving service.

May we be inspired by your divine love,
as we share our time, talent and treasure to
strengthen our family of faith.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Christmas Angel Tree

Once again parishioners are welcome to participate in the Angel Tree project benefitting needy children around St. Paul's Basilica in downtown Toronto, as well as less fortunate children within our own parish area.

The Angel Tree will be decorated with Christmas tags that have the name, age and gender of a child on each tag. Please take one or more tags and purchase an appropriate gift for the child. Return the *unwrapped* gifts to the church and place them under the tree.

The tree will be available this weekend Nov. 28/29, Dec. 5/6, Dec. 12/13 and *the gifts will be delivered to St. Paul's after the 11 a.m. Mass - December 13.*

Thank you for your continued support of this worthwhile project!

Project Hope

The Project Hope Refugee Committee has been working diligently with the Office of Refugees of the Archdiocese. They are currently attending various meetings in preparation for welcoming a refugee family with the support of our parish. The parish will be informed once final decisions have been made. In the meantime, should any parishioner know of a possible accommodation (apartment or house) which can be rented by the family once they come, please contact Fr. Pat at the parish office.

Day of Confessions

The archdiocese has asked all churches to hold a day of Confessions on Thursday, Dec. 17th, at various times of the day, to allow parishioners the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Fr. Pat has set the following schedule for St. Edward's Parish:

7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Christmas and New Year's Schedule

Nativity of the Lord – Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24

Masses: 4:30 p.m., 7:00 p.m., 12:00 Midnight

Nativity of the Lord – Christmas Day

Friday, December 25

Masses: at 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Feast of the Holy Family

(Regular Sunday Schedule)

Saturday, Dec. 26th – Mass at 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 27th, Masses: 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

New Year's Eve – Thursday, Dec. 31st, Mass at 4:30 p.m.

New Year's Day – Friday, Jan. 1st – Mass at 9:30 a.m. &
11:00 a.m.