



CHAPLAIN'S *report*

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS *In service to One. In service to all.*

LEARNING THE FAITH, LIVING THE FAITH ♦ 1 COLUMBUS PLAZA, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-3326, USA

Two Crucial Points of the Message of Guadalupe

BY SUPREME CHAPLAIN ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM LORI

The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is Dec. 12.

Here are two crucial points — adapted from a homily given to Knights of Columbus leaders, June 14, 2014 — to reflect on when sharing the story with Knights.

Point #1: Don't avoid the hard stuff; Our Lady will not be deterred.

You and I can only imagine how Juan Diego felt when Our Lady appeared to him. He wasn't looking for notoriety, quite the contrary. He was a pious man, on his way to Mass, concerned about his sick uncle. The last thing he expected was to encounter Our Lady and to become her messenger to the bishop.

Indeed, when his mission became complicated, he tried to evade the Blessed Mother by going around the other side of the hill, but Our Lady intercepted him, gently chided him with the words, "Am I not here who am your Mother?" — *"¿No estoy yo aqui que soy tu madre?"*

No doubt, you will meet up with many different kinds of obstacles. Some of your responsibilities will be enjoyable but some will be difficult. There will be problems that need to be addressed, fraternally yet frankly. There will be opportunities to grow the Order and advance its mission but with the opportunities there will also be complications.

So, we should pray to Our Lady of Guadalupe to ask for her help in the mission that the Order and your brother Knights have entrusted to you. She will help us to resist the temptation simply to enjoy our positions in the Order, to go along to get along, to take a victory lap, not addressing the challenges and the opportunities that are before us.

Point #2: Be convinced that Our Lady urgently wants you to succeed.

Until the time of the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Church's mission of evangelization was moving slowly. The Gospel was encountering still headwinds in the New World.

I would imagine that Bishop Zumarraga and his fellow missionaries must have discussed frequently the challenges that they were facing. Yet when he encountered the unmistakable evidence of Our Lady's presence in the roses and in her image on Juan Diego's cloak — everything changed. There was still caution and opposition from various quarters, but the Church's mission of evangelization exploded. Because of Mary's presence and prayers, millions heard the Gospel, encountered Christ and became members of Christ's Body, the Church. Her impact was not merely on individuals but on the culture, which was transformed from the inside out.

Sometimes we can be like the Spanish missionaries who discussed among themselves the problems they were facing. We too can feel stymied in advancing the mission of the Knights of Columbus. We can think of difficult personalities and situations that came long before we ever assumed leadership positions in the Order.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is our patron for a reason: When we open our hearts to her in prayer, when we sense her presence in our midst as our Mother, she will change everything for us. She will give us new confidence and a new sense of urgency in the mission that is ours.

For the mission you have been given is to share in a special way in the Church's mission of evangelization. Our Lady of Guadalupe is calling upon you, as she called upon St. Juan Diego and Bishop Zumarraga — to increase membership, to establish new councils, to set new records of charity — in a word to grow the Order because there are so many men and so many families that could find their way to Christ and the Church through us, the Knights of Columbus, and through our witness to the faith.

The Blessed Mother doesn't want any one of us to be content to do business as usual, content to be cautious, secure in excuses — rather she wants to touch our lives, deeply and personally, so that as leaders of the Knights we can be intentional disciples of her Son who in turn will advance the Church's mission of spreading the Gospel. *Vivat Jesus!*



A stained glass window of the Virgin of Tepeyac at Villa Maria Guadalupe.

5 Practical Ways to Celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe

Encourage the men in your council and parish in these steps to growing devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

1. Learn the prayers of the rosary in Spanish or another language.

Our Lady of Guadalupe's story is one of the most popular devotions among Hispanic Catholics, so her feast day is the perfect time for men to lead a bilingual rosary in Spanish and English.

2. Organize a procession.

If your diocese hosts a Guadalupe procession, encourage Knights and their families to attend. If not, ask their help in organizing a procession or other celebration at your parish — you could sing “*Las Mañanitas*,” a folk song traditionally sung before the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

3. Talk about the *tilma*.

The image on the *tilma* has qualities that can't humanly be replicated and it's virtually indestructible. Encourage your brother Knights and your parishioners to learn more, perhaps by hosting a showing of the film *Guadalupe: The Miracle and Message*.

4. Learn the worldwide appeal of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

This worldwide appeal of Our Lady of Guadalupe is reflected in her many titles, including the Patroness of all America, the Patroness of Mexico, the Patroness of the Philippines, Patroness of the Unborn, Star of the New World and Mother of the Civilization of Love. And in Poland, Our Lady of Guadalupe has found many devotees, thanks in part to the Knights who brought an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe from to Poland in 2011.

5. Take on her missionary spirit.

The message of Our Lady of Guadalupe at its essence is missionary — it's a message to love her son, Jesus Christ, and to share the love of her son with all peoples.

This list is adapted from a column on reviving devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe by Rose Wagner of the Knights' Corporate Communications Department.

A Prayer of Blessed Miguel Pro

The following was written by Blessed Miguel Pro, a Jesuit priest born in Guadalupe, Mexico, in 1891 more than three centuries after Our Lady's appearance. Martyred for his faith during a time of Catholic persecution, he offered this prayer shortly before his execution.

Does our life become from day to day more painful,
more oppressive, more replete with afflictions?

Blessed be he a thousand times who desires it so.

If life be harder, love makes it also stronger, and only this love,
grounded on suffering, can carry the Cross of my Lord Jesus Christ.

Love without egotism, without relying on self,
but enkindling in the depth of the heart an ardent thirst
to love and suffer for all those around us:

a thirst that neither misfortune nor contempt can extinguish. ...

I believe, O Lord; but strengthen my faith. ...

Heart of Jesus, I love thee; but increase my love.

Heart of Jesus, I trust in thee; but give greater vigor to my confidence.

Heart of Jesus, I give my heart to thee; but so enclose it in thee
that it may never be separated from thee.

Heart of Jesus, I am all thine; but take care of my promise
so that I may be able to put it in practice
even unto the complete sacrifice of my life.

From Discerning Hearts® a non-profit apostolate dedicated to evangelization and spiritual formation through new media. www.discerninghearts.com.



A cruciform reliquary containing relics of the six K of C priest-martyrs of Mexico is displayed before an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.



RESPOND TO THE EXPLOSIVE POWER OF CHRIST'S MERCY

A CHALLENGE AND MESSAGE FROM SUPREME CHAPLAIN ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM LORI

*Then [one of the criminals] said,
"Jesus, remember me when
you come into your kingdom."*

*He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you,
today you will be with me in Paradise."*

— Lk. 23:42-43

We've read these words so many times that it's easy to miss their explosive power. Here is Jesus using his last few minutes of earthly life to show mercy to a dying criminal and to promise him life in heaven that very day. Though we don't like to admit it, we have a tendency to insulate ourselves from entire groups of people. Perhaps it's the poor, homeless or sick. And yet these are precisely the people with whom Jesus spent so much time. While the religious "upper class" so often ignored or mocked him, the poor often acknowledged him as Lord and were transformed. May the unlikely words of a criminal — "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom" — become our own urgent prayer.

This Month's Challenge

This month, I challenge you to ask God's pardon and mercy by performing a thorough examination of conscience and going to Confession. I also challenge you to serve those in need individually or with your council through Faith in Action programs such as *Coats for Kids* or *Food for Families*.

Questions for Reflection:

Are there habits in your daily routine you could reexamine which exclude or ignore others on the margins of our society? What are some ways — large or small — you can increase your efforts to help the poor and the needy? How does going to Confession help us to imitate the Penitent Thief and what can we learn from his prayer?

Planning the Months Ahead

NOVEMBER

As your council commemorates All Souls and recalls its faithful departed, encourage Knights in your council to attend Mass together, witnessing to the devotion and brotherhood that are integral to the Order.

Remember deceased Knights, family members and parishioners during a memorial Mass. Also, sponsor a cemetery cleanup that ends with a prayer service for the deceased.

In honor of Veterans Day, lead council members and parishioners in helping meet the spiritual needs of veterans, by offering prayers in thanksgiving for their service. You might also visit a VA center, bringing the Eucharist to Catholics in residence or simply offering conversation and fellowship.

DECEMBER

Organize a parish gathering for a showing of *Guadalupe: The Miracle and Message* to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, on Dec. 12. Find details at www.guadalupefilm.com.

Join brother Knights in spreading the light of Christ by illuminating a Nativity scene at your parish on Dec. 3.

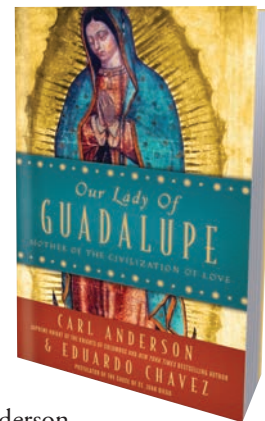
Invite the men of your parish and councils to an Advent Night of Reflection. Include discussions on the Nativity passages of the Gospels, quiet moments for personal reflection, spiritual direction, confession and Benediction. To organize a day for families with young children, use the booklet *Journey to the Inn: An Advent Celebration* (#9898).

Lead your parish in the *Consecration to the Holy Family* (#10371) on the feast of the Holy Family, Sunday, Dec. 29.

JANUARY

Encourage your parishioners and council members to attend the March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 24, 2020. If you are unable to attend due to parish obligations, say the Blessing for Travelers for your brother Knights before their departure.

Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love



This book by Supreme Knight Carl Anderson and Msgr. Eduardo Chávez traces the history of *Our Lady of Guadalupe* from the 16th century to the present and discusses how her message continues to speak to contemporary issues. To order, visit guadalupebook.com.

THE SECRETS OF HER IMAGE

GUADALUPAN CODEX

The marvelous image of Holy Mary of Guadalupe is captured on Juan Diego's humble *tilma* made of fibers from the *iztil* plant. It offers the true message of God's love for indigenous peoples and for people of all cultures, reflecting the theological imagery found in the book of Revelation: "A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet. . . She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth" (Rev 12: 1-2). It also recalls these words: "I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.'" (Rev 21: 2-4).

St. John Paul II described Our Lady of Guadalupe as the perfect model of inculturation; she comes to the indigenous people through their own customs and their cultural practices. To fully understand the image, then, we must turn to the viewpoints of the indigenous people — especially the native *tlamatimime* (wise men), who used complex pictography — and those of several scientific disciplines.

HER EYES

The Virgin's lovely eyes appear merciful and compassionate, but they do more than portray human emotion. Scientific researchers have proven that each of her eyes reflect a number of figures. The reflections appear just as they would in a living person, with each cornea reflecting a mirror image of the other. These images reveal the people who witnessed the first unveiling of the *tilma*.



HER FACE

The face of Holy Mary of Guadalupe is that of a young lady of great beauty. Appearing tender, merciful, loving and compassionate, her head is angled downward in a sign of humility; and although she stands in front of the sun, she bows before one greater than she. The coloring of her face indicates that she is a *mestiza* (of mixed race), indicating that she belongs to both the Spaniards and the natives, and thus to all people.



THE BROOCH

The Virgin wears an oval-shaped brooch with a cross in the center. Spaniards saw the cross as illustrating the depth of Jesus' sacrifice for us. Meanwhile, for the natives, the brooch recalled the semiprecious stones that were placed between the neck and chest of their stone idols. Each stone, called "the heart of the divinity," would be polished until it gleamed and reflected the face of the person who stood before it. When the native people observed the cross within the Virgin's brooch, they saw it as reflecting the sacrifice of God's love. Through her loving heart, the natives came to understand the complex mysteries of God's sacrifice on the cross and his great love for humanity — a love so deep that, even as he was dying, led him to give his own mother as mother of the whole world.

THE FOUR-PETALLED FLOWER

Positioned directly under the black sash and immediately over the Virgin's womb is a unique four-petalled jasmine flower. The flower is central to understanding the message and identity of the Virgin and her child. First, its four petals represent the four cardinal directions (north, south, east and west). Second, the parts of the flower also correspond to the native people's theological representation of a singular living and true deity. By utilizing the natives' rich cosmological thought in this way, the Virgin welcomes all people, whatever their nationality or ethnicity, to know her Son, he who is the true Creator of the Universe and the true Lord of the World.



THE FLOWER CLUSTERS

Overlaying the Virgin's dress is a complex floral design containing nine different flower clusters. The triangular shape within each cluster resembles a *tepec* (hill) and its curving stem recalls the Nahuatl hieroglyphic symbol for river. Upon seeing these symbols, the Aztec people would have immediately recalled the concept of *altepetal* (city-state; civilization); it's how they depicted a city-state in their own hieroglyphic writings. The flower clusters carry additional significance — each cluster resembles a heart and its arteries, and their stems appear to "grow" out of the Virgin's sky-colored mantle and spread across her earth-colored tunic. This indicates the divine love that will come from the heavens and encompass the entire earth.



HER SHOE

The Virgin's shoe, located in the center of the black moon, has no pigment; rather, it is the color of the *tilma* itself. The weave of the threads can be clearly seen, indicating that the cloth was not prepared with a primer or other plaster. Cloth of this nature is porous, contains holes, and possesses visible seams, tears and various knotted threads; as such, a primer is needed to hide imperfections and allow color to adhere to the surface of such a rough material. However, as mentioned, the shoe indicates that the cloth of the *tilma* underwent no such preparation. Instead, the *tilma*'s natural imperfections are used to the best advantage, highlighting and contributing to the beauty of the miraculous image.



HER ROBE

The salmon-pink robe represents the earth. Not only do the reddish-brown and crimson shadows evoke the colors of the Mexican soil, but the pictographic characters on it also represent mountains and water. The lower part of her robe is folded like the blankets pictured in the ancient manuscripts, or codices, of the Aztec people. Such blankets were given as tributes by the indigenous peoples to their conquerors.



THE NAME "HOLY MARY OF GUADALUPE"

The Virgin called herself "Holy Mary of Guadalupe," combining the names "Mary" — a Jewish name that means "she who illuminates" — and "Guadalupe" — a word of Arabic origin that means "the river of black pebbles" or "the bed of the river." Together, the name can be translated as "the holy riverbed that transports and illuminates." In taking this name, Mary shows a profound theological truth: She herself is not to be worshipped. Instead, her role is to illuminate: she brings her son, who is the Living Water and the Light of the World, into the world. In addition, since her name combines words from two cultures frequently at war with one another, it indicates yet another truth: Through the intercession of Holy Mary, warring cultures can be united. Therefore her name is very significant, for through it she reveals her identity and her mission.



THE SPILLED ACID

In 1784, more than 200 years after the image appeared on Juan Diego's *tilma* (cloak), a silversmith assigned to clean the *tilma*'s frame carelessly spilled his acidic cleaning solution. This should have caused a disastrous hole, but the image was undamaged except for a subtle stain on its right side. The image has also been exposed to harsh minerals, dampness, holy water, candle wax and smoke, the caresses of the faithful, and even exploding bombs, yet it has remained preserved for centuries.

HER HAIR

In Aztec society, married women wove their hair into a special braid, pinning it up on the sides of their head. Yet in the image of the *tilma*, Mary's hair is parted and combed straight down, thus indicating her virginity.



HER HANDS

Our Lady of Guadalupe is a woman deep in prayer; she clasps her hands together in the European manner of praying. She also prays in the manner and custom of the native people. To them, she appears to be holding the golden flower-heart glyphs within her hands. This strongly parallels the spiritual rituals of the Aztecs: "Our elders used to offer hearts to God so there would be harmony in life," they said. "This woman tells us to put our hearts between her hands, without ripping them out, so that she may present them to God." The position of her feet likewise indicates prayer, for she appears to be moving forward in a dance step used in indigenous prayer dances.



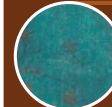
THE DARK SASH

The sash worn by the woman on the *tilma* indicates her maternity. The Spanish word for pregnant, "*encinta*," directly translates to "with ribbon."



HER MANTLE

The blue-green mantle covering the figure of Our Lady of Guadalupe from head to toe indicates that she is an empress, because in the native culture, only the *tlatoani* (he who commands; the emperor) was permitted to wear a mantle of such color. The colors carry symbolism as well: blue represents the color of the heavenly sky, while green is the color of life. On the mantle are found 46 stars, which correspond to the exact position of the constellations of the winter solstice in the year 1531.



THE SUN'S RAYS

Mary's entire figure is surrounded by golden rays that form a *mandorla* (an almond-shaped halo signifying dignity). The *mandorla* recalls European images of the Immaculate Conception, and indigenous peoples understood the *mandorla* to symbolize her power and importance. She must be, they said, "a woman of great importance, more than emperors even, whose power — despite being a woman — is such that she stands in front of the sun, our giver of life and bread upon the moon, our guide in the fight for the light and she is dressed in stars, which rule our existence and tell us when to plant, increase or harvest."



THE BLACK MOON

The woman stands in the center of a crescent moon, whose dark black color contrasts sharply with the sun behind it. Her position on the moon was one of the most important symbols for the indigenous Mexican people. The word "Mexico" — a combination of the native words *metzli* (moon), *xicilli* (navel or center) and *co* (place) — means "the place in the center of the moon." The native people understood Mexico to be the center of the universe and the source of all life. In addition, they associated the sun and the moon with Aztec deities to whom they offered ritual sacrifice. Yet the Virgin of Guadalupe eclipses the bright rays of the sun and darkens the light of the moon. She thus reveals that the child in her womb — prophetically called "the sun of justice" (Mal 3:20) — is stronger than the pagan deities. As the one, true God, he triumphs over everything and radiates his divine, life-giving love throughout the whole universe.



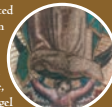
THE CLOUDS

For Europeans, the clouds surrounding the Virgin Mother's figure indicated she came from the heavens. For the indigenous peoples, the meaning was even deeper, for mist and clouds symbolized an unknown place. They also saw clouds as visible coffers of hidden heavenly treasures. That the Virgin is among the clouds indicates that she is from a heavenly and yet unknown place as well as carries a hidden spiritual treasure. She is the eyes, ears and voice of this precious heavenly being, and through her, he is made visible and heaven is made known.



THE ANGEL

The little angel is a very important figure. First, the angel's receding hairline, associated with people of advanced years, indicates that the angel possessed the great wisdom and authority that associated with elders of the Aztec communities. Second, with its eagle-like wings, it recalls the birth name of St. Juan Diego. Prior to his baptism, Juan Diego was known as *Cuauhtlatotzin*, "an eagle that speaks precious things." With its right hand, the little angel holds a blue-green mantle that signifies the universe, and with its left hand, it holds a pink robe that signifies the earth. In this way, the angel unites heaven and earth in harmony. For the natives, the colors of the little angel's wings were also symbolic, for blue represented the south, white the west and red the east. Together with the moon's black color, which represented the north, the four colors suggest the four points of the universe.



Adapted from the text of *Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of the Civilization of Love* by Msgr. Eduardo Chávez, postulator of St. Juan Diego's cause, and Carl A. Anderson, supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus. The book is available to order in English and Spanish. For details, visit guadalupebook.com.

For information about how to order additional copies of this poster, please visit kofc.org/cis.



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