



Archdiocese of San Antonio
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Homily for Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
December 12, 2014

The story of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth is beautiful and powerful. Let us reflect on its significance. Herself pregnant, Mary hastens to visit Elizabeth who is also with child. They have much in common: they are family, they both are pregnant, and their pregnancies are filled with mystery. Elizabeth is an old woman who had been barren. Mary is a young maiden who is not yet married. Both are bearing children by the power and sovereign will of God. Both women have said Yes to God's word to them. Indeed, Elizabeth's greeting praises both Mary and her child precisely because Mary had been chosen by God to be the mother of the Lord and she has believed and accepted the mysterious word of God. There is a beautiful dialogue between Elizabeth and Mary in these few verses; they share with one another their new experience and their faith and trust in God's love for them.

Elizabeth's son will close out an era in the history of salvation, announcing the new age and coming of the Messiah. Mary's child will usher in a new age in the story of our salvation. It seems that John the Baptist already knows this because he stirs in Elizabeth's womb when he hears the voice of the Messiah's mother upon her arrival.

What God has done for Mary – which she describes in her *Magnificat*, is what God will do for the poor, the powerless, and the oppressed people of the world. Mary is the Mother of Immanuel, Jesus who is God-with-us! God is with us his children at all times and in every place.

Today, Mary's story becomes **our** story. God reassures us of his abiding presence in our lives. Today, we become aware of the dignity that God has bestowed upon us and upon every human person. We, too, are called to bear God's Son in our hearts and in our bodies through the power of the Holy Spirit. Today, we are challenged to be servants of the Lord -- like Mary and Saint Juan Diego. Today, also we are sent into the world to proclaim the Lord Jesus and his gospel not only in words but above all in our deeds. We are to live the gospel message in our relationships with others just as Jesus, Mary, and the apostles did. We are also to serve others, especially the needy, as Mary served Elizabeth during her pregnancy.

You and I have a special devotion, a special place in our hearts for Our Lady of Guadalupe, *la Morenita*. Consider the beauty and the richness of her image. She presents herself in the light of dawn, dispelling the darkness. She presents herself as pregnant, peaceful. Juan Diego hears the beautiful music around her – the singing of birds at an unexpected time of year. She sings a “new song,” a “new melody.” She is surrounded by beauty, the roses blooming with brilliant color and exquisite perfume, during the winter.

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. Moreover, *la Morenita* engages in dialogue with the humble Juan Diego. She speaks first, and he listens attentively. When he speaks with her, she listens carefully to him – with great love and tenderness.

Our Lady is at one with all people, she is the Mother of us all, the Mother of the New Evangelization, the teacher of a new dialogue. 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 undocumented, the detained and the deported, and especially the children!

May Our Lady of Guadalupe teach us, by her image and her example, true Christian witness, authentic discipleship. May she teach us to trust God and to say Yes to whatever he asks of us. Dear Lady, be with us always as our mother, our protector, our intercessor.