

*Homily for the 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year A
(12-11-05)*

*Saint Louis the Crusader Catholic Church
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Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

Tomorrow is the **Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe**. And so I would like to speak to you about the very intriguing history of this unique icon of Our Lady.

Firstly, we are not concerned here only with a religious painting, but with the story of a dramatic encounter between two civilizations: that of 16th century Aztec Mexico and Catholic Spain. Secular historians tend only to see conflict in this encounter, but a more thorough analysis reveals an amazing reconciliation under the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary.

THE SATANIC CULTURE AND RELIGION OF THE AZTECS

Mexico prior to its discovery and conquest by Spain was ruled by the Aztec Empire, whose capital city was called Tenochtitlán or Cactus Rock. Tenochtitlán had 300,000 inhabitants but those who ruled from there controlled a population of 15 million souls broken down into a great number of subject tribes. In fact, the inhabitants of the empire of the Aztecs were more slaves than subjects, because they were required to pay tribute to their Aztec overlords with their sons and daughters.

The two principle deities of the Aztecs were **HUITZILOPCHTLI** and **TEZCATLIPOCA**. **HUITZILOPCHTLI**, the **Sun god**, was also called The Hummingbird Wizard and the Lover of Hearts & Drinker of Blood. **TEZCATLIPOCA**, the Moon god, was called “He who is at the shoulder” as tempter, Lord of the Dark, and the god of Phantoms and Monsters.

These two deities demanded human blood in propitiatory sacrifice. And the Aztecs obliged. It is thought that Huitzilopchtli craved 50,000 human sacrifices a year. As a result about one in five children were sacrificed to him and the Aztecs actually exterminated entire tribes trying to propitiate his blood lust.

The reality is that the Aztecs were worshipping *demons* and their religion was a form of *satanism*. In fact, in all of history there has never been a culture that worshipped satan so openly and explicitly as the Aztec.

The Aztec altars and temples were the famous Mesoamerican pyramids. In Tenochtitlán the great temple was consecrated in 1487 in an orgy of continual murders that lasted four days and nights. It is said that the Aztec priests were so adept at their grisly trade that, wielding huge black obsidian knives, they could hack the heart out of a victim in 15 seconds. The consecration of the temple claimed, by some estimates, 20,000 human lives,

perhaps thousands more. The Aztec priests, understandably, had become the most horrific of people to behold, and their clothes and hair were caked and stained with human blood.

As this was happening the Aztec nobility sat watching in scented, rose covered boxes, listening to the beating of huge snakeskin drums that heralded the sacrifices.

The Aztec religion so perverted its adherents that some came to see it as an honor to have their children offered in sacrifice. For one festival a young boy of about 12 would be chosen who was known for his beauty and perfection. This future victim was honored with the greatest respect during the time leading up to the sacrifice, and was given the freedom to enter any home and partake of whatever foods he desired. On the day of the sacrifice he would freely approach the pyramid with a flute, ascending it and pausing to play a melody at set intervals. At the top he submitted to murder and his ravaged body was kicked off the top of the pyramid to be consumed later by the cannibalistic priests and their animals.

This was the state of affairs the Christians of Spain found when they arrived in Mexico in the 16th century. You can imagine what they must have thought and felt.

However, a very interesting aspect of this drama is that there was another deity called **Quetzalcoatl**, “the Feathered Serpent,” the patron of learning and civilized skills. About the year 987 AD one of the high priests of this deity rose up in opposition to human sacrifice. This man was a member of the Toltec tribe that preceded the Aztecs. His name was **Ce Acatl Topiltzin**. As a result of his opposition to human sacrifice, Topiltzin was exiled across the sea and took refuge on Yucatan peninsula. But a legend arose, perhaps originating with his own challenge when he was exiled, that one day he would return to vindicate himself. He even gave the date in their calendar: he would return in the year *1-Reed* (Quetzalcoatl’s name year which came around every 52 years) and the day *9-Wind* (Quetzalcoatl’s name day).

ARRIVAL OF CATHOLIC SPANISH CONQUISTADOR HERNÁN CORTÉS

In the Christian calendar, this day corresponded to April 22, 1519: Good Friday in that year. It was on this very day that the Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés disembarked on the Gulf Coast shore of the Aztec Empire. In honor of Our Lord’s Passion he wore black, just as did the pagan priest Ce Acatl Topiltzin when he was exiled 500 years before.

These details did not go unnoticed amongst the Aztecs. Their scouts had tracked Cortés’ progress along the southern Gulf Coast through other territories, and when he landed on the precise day of year 1-Reed, 9-Wind,

they had no doubt as to what was happening. It is said the Aztec emperor, Montezuma II, went into seclusion for days, living in a bewilderment of mixed fear and hope.

Very soon Cortés met the local Indians of the Cempoala tribe, who told him of their subjugation to the Aztecs. Cortés told them of his king over the seas, King Carlos of Spain, and asked them if they desired to be placed under his protection. They accepted the offer.

Cortés soon began his famous march to Mexico City to meet Montezuma. Before leaving with his 300 men he commended his soul to God and scuttled his 9 ships. There would be no turning back.

CORTÉS DESTROYS THE SATANIC AZTEC POWER

On the way they discovered in the villages scene after scene of horrific human sacrifice. At Zocotlán the Spaniards recorded that they had found 100,000 human skulls arranged neatly in racks. The chief there, **Olintetl**, tried to dissuade Cortés from going to Mexico City with tales of its impregnability. But Cortés responded by saying that his own king “*sends a command to your great Montezuma that he is not to sacrifice or kill any more Indians, or rob his vassals or take lands...*” [he then admonished

Olintel to] *give up your sodomy and other evil practices, for so commands our Lord God, Whom we believe and Whom we adore.*"¹

In November of 1519 Cortés arrived at Tenochtitlán and was greeted by Montezuma personally. He and his men were received as uneasy guests into the palace. For 3 months the Spaniards lived in the city and Cortés tried to convince Montezuma that it was wrong to offer human sacrifice and to put an end to it. He even gained permission from Montezuma to erect a chapel and altar to Our Lady in the very pagan temple.

But eventually the Aztec priests, sensing the danger, precipitated the assassination of their own leader Montezuma and an attack on the Spanish. The Spaniards who were unfortunate enough to be captured were sacrificed to the demons. I will not repeat the entire story, but in the end Hernán Cortés was the victor. With 1,000 Spanish soldiers and 20,000 Indian allies, he toppled the satanic Aztec Empire forever on August 13, 1521.

PRIESTS OF JESUS CHRIST IN PAGAN MEXICO

The next chapter in this story is very different and hard for secular historians to comprehend. After the conquest, which was very bloody and devastating to say the least, Hernán Cortes reestablished order and abolished human sacrifice.

¹ Warren Carroll, *Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Conquest of Darkness* (Christendom Press: Front Royal, VA, 1983) p. 35, citing Spanish contemporary historian and witness Bernal Diaz.

He then sent for priests from Spain and on the 13th of May of 1524 twelve Franciscans disembarked at Vera Cruz on the Mexican coast. They came to be called the Twelve Apostles of Mexico. These holy priests walked the entire 200 mile distance to Mexico City in their poor brown robes and barefoot (a custom that continued among the Franciscans for 250 years). When they arrived at Mexico City the Aztecs were amazed to see the great and proud conquistador Hernán Cortés, their new ruler, humbly kneel before them to kiss their hands in veneration.

From 1524 to 1531 the Franciscans worked tirelessly day and night in their efforts to evangelize. And it should be noted that this is not a story of forced conversions, despite the Spanish conquest and abolishing of human sacrifice. The priests won converts, yet slowly: they were only 12 workers in a harvest of 15 million souls. One of their converts in the year 1524 was a Chichimeca Indian named Juan Diego.

BISHOP ZUMÁRRAGA, PROTECTOR OF THE INDIANS

Now during this period, in the absence of Hernán Cortes, there arrived new governors from Spain, headed by an evil man named **Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán**. These men began to exploit and enslave the Indians and even to abuse the priests and thwart their efforts. When news of this got back to Spain, Emperor Carlos sent a Franciscan Bishop to Mexico, giving him

special authority and the title, “**Protector of the Indians of Mexico.**” His name was **Juan de Zumárraga.**

He did not waste time in punishing the malefactors, and forced Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán to do penance by riding through the streets on a mule backwards. Eventually Nuño was sent to Spain and imprisoned. In 1530 Emperor Carlos issued a decree forbidding slavery, and [in 1532] Pope Paul III issued a decree punishing it with excommunication. The Indians knew that their man had arrived.

THE GREAT APPARITION AND SIGN FROM HEAVEN²

On December 9 of 1531 the converted Indian Juan Diego presented himself to this great and holy bishop with an amazing claim: On a hill called Tepeyac near the City, he had had seen a beautiful and radiant woman who said to him: “*Juanito, you must know and be very certain in your heart, my son, that I am truly the perpetual and perfect Virgin Mary, holy mother of the True God through Whom everything lives, the Creator and Master of Heaven and Earth...*”

The woman told him to go to Bishop Zumárraga telling him she desired a chapel to be built on the spot. Of course he was skeptical. Juan

² See for this section the works:

Thomas Sennott, Acheiropoeta: Not Made by Hands – The Miraculous Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Holy Shroud of Turin, (Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate: New Bedford, MA, 1988).

Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, A Handbook on Guadalupe (Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate: New Bedford, MA, 1997).

Diego returned and told Our Lady what the Bishop had said. She asked him to return and the next day showed the little Indian a field of flowers blooming in the dry winter earth. Juan Diego, believing this was the sign, cut and gathered the flowers into his mantle, called a *tilma* and left to show the Bishop his prize. When he let fall the tilma before the Bishop's eyes there appeared the famous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe that you see here in copy.

Because of this event it is said that although Hernán Cortés and his army vanquished the military might of the devil-worshipping Aztec empire of Montezuma, and although bands of holy Franciscan priests spent themselves for years seeking to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Mexico, it can safely be said that the principle evangelizer of Mexico was the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the four years following the apparition, over 5 million Indians converted to the Catholic Faith. By 1548 nine million had converted and within 50 years all of Mexico had come into the fold: 20 million souls all told. In comparison, it took 200 years to convert the Philippines.

It is interesting to note also that just two years prior to Cortés' arrival in Mexico, in 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral, launching the protestant revolt. It is as if God

compensated for their rebellion from His Church by winning over an entire New World.

MYSTERIES OF THE TILMA

The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe itself is quite intriguing. As I said, it appeared on the tilma of the Indian Juan Diego, a garment made of maguey fiber from the cactus plant, somewhat like burlap. It has only been preserved airtight for the last 50 years, yet has not fallen into decay at all, despite that fact that maguey fiber garments never lasted more than about 25 years. It survived unscathed a century of kisses, touches, placing of medals, rosaries and swords. On top of that, the colors have not faded and retain their brilliancy and beauty.

The reverse side of it very rough, as would be expected, but the front with Our Lady's image is silky soft. The texture of the original is something like butterfly wings or bird feathers, that is, it has a sheen and capacity to reflect light and change hue.

Even though the hand of a human artist can be detected on some portions of the tilma, the same cannot be said for Our Lady's face, hands, robe and mantle.

In 1979 Dr. Philip Callahan, a biophysicist from the University of Florida did infrared studies on the tilma and found that there was no sizing of the image, no under sketching and no varnishing.

In 1936 Dr. Richard Kuhn, a German chemist who won the Nobel Prize, examined the tilma and declared that the colors on portions of it are not of animal, plant or mineral pigment, which is quite mysterious for the 16th century. He even said that the original figure of Our Lady and the blue mantle is inexplicable.

The eyes of Our Lady were subjected to studies beginning in the 1950s. Upon amplification they show the reflection of a man that strangely corresponds to antique paintings of Juan Diego himself, just as our eyes show reflections of things we are looking at.

The tilma is full of imagery, which I cannot go into detail here. Suffice to note that Mary is blocking out the sun and standing on the moon, representative of the two demons Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipoca.

HUMAN SACRIFICE IN PAGAN MEXICO VIS-A-VIS PAGAN AMERICA

I would like to end this homily by saying that because of the Blessed Virgin Mary's role in overcoming the paganism of Mexico, with its demons lusting for endless human sacrifices, she is rightly seen as the patroness of the unborn.

We are currently sacrificing our children on the altars of convenience in America's abortion mills at twice the rate that the Aztecs offered their sons and daughters on the altars of their pyramid temples. And just as the Aztec nobility sat and watched approvingly from scented and rose-covered booths as their subjects

were murdered, so too our own cultural elites sit in their privileged seats of government and chairs of academia as America's unborn are slaughtered.

I think we might ask ourselves whether or not the demons Huitzilopchtli (Lover of Hearts and Drinker of Blood) and Tezcatlipoca (the Lord of the Dark) have reemerged from Hell in our own day.

While it remains a mystery how long God in His providence will allow the term of the demons to endure, and despite the fact that we have no Christian army to topple the new paganism, one thing is certain, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady, reigns as Queen of Heaven and Earth. She is still fully capable of crushing the head of the ancient serpent in modern America as she did in 16th century Mexico. It is only a matter of time before she acts...

Long live Christ the King! Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe!