Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

2022.12.12

Bishop Robert Barron introduces today's Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe by acknowledging the apparition of Mary at Tepeyac, Mexico, one of the most astounding chapters in the history of Christian evangelism.

He points out that the Franciscan missionaries had been laboring in Mexico for 20 years but had made little progress. However, within 10 years of the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe, practically the entire Mexican people, nine million strong, had converted to Christianity. The Mother of God had proved a more effective evangelist than Saints Peter, Paul, Patrick, and Francis Xavier combined! And with that great national conversion, the Aztec practice of human sacrifice ended. Mary had battled fallen spirits and won a culture-changing victory for the God of love. No words were spoken by her that could be attributed to having caused such a stunning reversal of fortune. How can that be?

One of the shifts in emphasis at Marist has been to rekindle the spark of evangelization among our students when they graduate from Marist School. We want them to leave Marist loving Christ, wanting to discern his purposes for them and, quoting Fr. Colin, "to continually strive to draw upon her spirit and breathe it: a spirit of humility, self-denial, intimate union with God, and the most ardent love of neighbor."

When looking at the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I realized for the first time that the Marist spirit that I just described radiated outward from her dress and demeanor as Our Lady of Guadalupe. Her spirit of humility, self-denial, intimate union with God, and the most ardent love of neighbor is right there for all to see. I wonder how I missed it for all these years.

We want our students to leave Marist with a mission. With Our Lady of Guadalupe as a model, we want our students to do for our increasingly secular society what Mary did for the Mexican people. We want our students to announce the God of nonviolence and forgiving love to our culture. We want them to be bearers of Jesus to a world that needs him more than ever. We want them to bring about a great national conversion from the practices of human sacrifice that are offered on the altars of abortion, euthanasia, exploitation of the poor, racism, disdain of the environment, injustice—everything that is opposed to advancing the reign of God.

Mary had battled fallen spirits in Mexico and had won a culture-changing victory for the God of love. To be a Marist is to engage in a similar battle with no less an expectation of culture-changing victory for the God of love, Christ, the son of Mary, our Lord and Savior. We need not fret about finding the right words. They will make their meaning felt through her spirit of humility, self-denial, intimate union with God, and the most ardent love of neighbor that will radiate outward from hearts that know no other way other than that of her own.

Amen.

Mary, Seat of Wisdom, pray for us.