



ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

December 10, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This Monday, December 12, the Church celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe – Patroness of the Americas. The Feast celebrates the appearances of the Blessed Mother in 1531 to Juan Diego, a simple Indian farmer, just north of what is now Mexico City. Those encounters between Our Lady and St. Juan Diego shaped the history of the Americas, bringing unity to the peoples of Mexico and a deeper respect for the dignity of all life. As Saint John Paul observed, “Juan Diego facilitated the fruitful meeting of two worlds.”

In a world marked by migrations on an unprecedented scale and in an age in which vulnerable life remains at risk and cultures continue to clash, the message of Guadalupe continues to be as relevant as ever. With this in mind, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has designated this year’s Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe as a National Day of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees.

I encourage all of us to pray for our brothers and sisters around the world – and here in our country – who find themselves living in fear and uncertainty, away from their home countries due to violence, famine, oppression, and economic desperation. As we were reminded by Cardinal DiNardo, President of the USCCB, their experience is not unlike that of Christ, who “was not born in the comfort of his own home, but rather in an unfamiliar manger.”

I hope that our celebration this year of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be just a first step. We can all make a difference by simply reaching out to those who have come here from another country. Every person has a unique story to tell and the simple acts of welcoming and listening can bring people together.

More opportunities for prayer, education and awareness will be available January 8 – 14, which is National Migration Week in the United States. Materials for that week are already available at www.usccb.org, and www.mncatholic.org.

Thank you for your faithfulness and caring and please be assured of my prayers, through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, for all who will be observing this Monday as our National Day of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis