FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
December 12

Gospel: (Luke 1:26-38)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And he said to her, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you…Do not be afraid, Mary for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus…The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age…for nothing is impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Reflection:

On a December morning in 1531, the Virgin Mary appeared in Mexico to Juan Diego, an indigenous Mexican farmer. During that first sacred encounter and in several more apparitions over the next few days, Mary spoke to Juan Diego in his native, Aztec language and asked him to petition the bishop to build a church. She instructed him to bring roses to the bishop, and when he opened his cloak to drop the flowers before the bishop's feet, all those present were stunned to see Our Lady's image painted on his cloak. Why did Mary appear to Juan Diego rather than to the bishop himself, or someone else who was more powerful? Mary's action is a sign of solidarity with those who might not be considered the most prestigious or powerful by society's standards. She shows that even a humble farmer has important contributions to make.

Vincentian Meditation:

Frederic Ozanam had a strong devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, from his youth to his death. And so with a Vincentian heart we respond to the US Catholic Bishops request encouraging Catholic to mark the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe by praying in solidarity with migrants and refugees everywhere. As the patron of the Americans, she gives us a model for how we too might reach out to and welcome those who seek better lives here in our land. Our Lady of Guadalupe's Feast takes place in Advent, when we recall how Mary journeyed to Bethlehem with Joseph and gave birth to Jesus in a manger. Throughout Advent we ask Mary's intercession for the safety and well-being of her fellow traveler—especially migrants and refugees—and we pray that her witness inspires us to stand in greater solidarity with them.

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)*

How does our Conference show devotion to Mary?

Closing Prayer:

Through Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, we now lift our hearts and say,
> **- bring healing for those who are brokenhearted and protect all migrants and refugees.**

Through Mary, patroness of our Society,
> **-we ask for the grace of a Vincentian heart. Amen**