

**Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul
December 11, 2012**

On this cold and clear December night
many of us have arrived at this beautiful cathedral
after walking with the image of Our Lady
through the dark streets of Philadelphia.

From the parishes of Saint Joan of Arc,
Visitation, Saint Michael and Saint Peter,
and Saint Thomas Aquinas and Annunciation:
we accompanied her as our mother
proud to show our love for her.

We accompanied her as the one
who always protects us and intercedes for us
confident to show our faith
in the role God has for her in our lives.

We accompanied her
as the patron and queen of Mexico and all the Americas
eager to show our devotion for her.

We accompanied her as the one
who carries the Son of the Living God within her womb
her waist covered by a purple sash/belt,
with her we wait during these days of Advent
to celebrate the birth of her Son.

And now,
she accompanies us
during this Liturgy we celebrate on her feast
to the home of her cousin Elizabeth
as our deacon Epifanio
recounted for us just a few moments ago.

There we learn her great place in the Church.
There we see more clearly
why she has such a special place in each one of our lives,
why she fills our hearts with such affection and love.

Years before Our Lady
ever set foot in the house of Elizabeth
years before the archangel Gabriel
ever brought the message of God the Father to Mary
years before Saint Ann and saint Joachim
brought Mary into the world as her parents

God made a promise to His people:
light in place of darkness
joy in place of sadness
freedom in place of exile
a son who will bring his people home.

These words
spoken by God through his prophet Isaiah
and repeated for us by our lector Nancy
were spoken to His people
at a time when they were in a difficult situation.

Their land had been conquered
by a nation stronger than themselves.
Many of their people had been taken away
to a land not their own.
They had begun to lose hope.

In this dark moment
in which it seemed that the darkness
was stronger than anything else
and there was no future for God's people
God Himself intervenes
and promises a future
very different than the present moment.

In this promise Elizabeth believed.
In this promise Elizabeth hoped.
And through the gift of God,
through the Holy Spirit,
Elizabeth was able to see how God
was fulfilling the promise He made long ago.

From her encounter with the archangel Gabriel,
from the Annunciation,
Mary goes in haste
to the house of Elizabeth
to the Visitation,
full of life,
a mother awaiting the birth of her son.

The moment Elizabeth sees Mary
she shows what she knows:
“Bendita tu entre las mujeres
y bendito el fruto de to vientre.
Quien soy yo para la madre de mi Senor venga a verme?”

Dichosa tu, que has creido,
porque se cumplirá cuanto te fue
anunciado de parte del Senor.”

Elizabeth could see
that God was fulfilling His promise:
light in place of darkness
joy in place of sadness
freedom in place of exile
through the child in Mary’s womb
through her “yes” to God’s plan.
Elizabeth believed as Mary believed
as Saint Joseph would believe too.

And what a difference their faith made.

God is not a God solely of the past,
His actions simply for us to remember.

Our faith in what God has done for us
makes it possible for the door to be opened
for God to do for us what He wants to do now.

When a man, woman or child has faith
the door is opened for him or her
to have communion with God
and to be a part of God's Church.
Está siempre abierta por nosotros.

(“ ‘La puerta de la fe’ (cf. *Hch* 14, 27), que introduce en la vida de comunión con Dios y permite la entrada en su Iglesia, está siempre abierta para nosotros.” *Porta fidei*, no. 1)

Like Elizabeth we can see
what God is doing here and now
through the preaching of the word of God
through the offering of the Eucharist
through the sacraments
through our love for the mother of His Son
through our love for each other.

When we are able to see this
we are blessed
because we have believed
and acted upon what we believed.
It makes us who we are
here and now.

It is possible
that we will reflect the light which is Christ
and shatter the darkness of another's lack of faith.

It is possible
that we will reflect the joy who is Christ
and lessen the sadness of another due to sin.

It is possible
that we reflect Christ who reconciles us to His Father
and bring return another to God and His Church.

As others watched us
as we walked the dark streets of this city tonight
carrying the image of 'la morenita',
some curious, some making the sign of the cross,
some making an act of love to Our Lady,
so others notice how we live,
what we say, what we do each day
and through the example of our faith
can see if like "la Virgencita"
we carry Christ to the world or not.

When we do, what a difference our faith can make.