

**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.