



## Essential Evangelization

### Our Blessed Mother

This week marks two of the most famous feast days of our Blessed Mother. As Catholics, Mary is a special saint and indeed a heavenly mother to all of us. She is the patron saint of our very own United States and upheld by John Paul II as a significant “co-operator” in our salvation history. December 8<sup>th</sup> is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Not to be confused with a famous Pittsburgh Steelers long football pass play with a similar name, the meaning behind this feast day is that Mary herself was conceived without the stain of original sin. She became the perfect vessel for the very flesh and blood of Our Savior Jesus Christ. Mary has a special place in heaven, can intercede for us, and the rosary is a powerful prayer that can draw us closer in communion with her Son, Jesus.

December 9<sup>th</sup> marks the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a very famous holy day for our brothers and sisters in Mexico. On December 9, 1531 Mary made her first appearance to Juan Diego, a native Indian, near Tepeyac, Mexico. In fact, December 9<sup>th</sup> is Saint Juan Diego’s feast day! The second apparition came on December 12<sup>th</sup>, thus marking the calendar feast day. On this day, upon returning from his miraculous visit, Juan opened his cloak in the presence of his unbelieving bishop and miracle winter roses fell to the ground. The bishop fell to his knees and believed. On Juan Diego’s cloak there also appeared an image of Mary exactly as she had appeared to him at the hill of Tepeyac. The miracle tilma and image is still on display today in Mexico City and is the most visited Catholic shrine in the world.

Do you believe?

*In union with Christ and in submission to him, she (Mary) collaborated in obtaining the grace of salvation for all humanity...In God’s plan, Mary is the ‘woman’ (cf. John 2:4; John 19:26), the New Eve, united to the New Adam in restoring humanity to its original dignity. Her cooperation with her Son continues for all time in the universal motherhood which she enjoys in the order of grace. Trusting in this maternal cooperation, let us turn to Mary, imploring her help in all our needs.”*

Pope John Paul II

*This is one of a series of articles on  
Evangelization from the  
Evangelization Committee*