

Our Lady of Guadalupe

I grew up in a house here in Kansas City with three brothers, two sisters, two parents, four bedrooms, and one bathroom. We lived many years without air conditioning or color TV. We had no dogs or cats, mainly because my parents couldn't afford another mouth to feed. Dad took the bus to work. Mom stayed at home to care for us kids, clean the house, and prepare the meals. We didn't have many clothes, but Mom kept them clean. We worried about money. We lived in fear that we wouldn't have enough to pay for the days ahead.

I don't know how my parents did it. But they provided a loving home, a connection to the local church, an education in Catholic schools, and enough food to make it through each day.

My father died eleven years ago, and my mother is 93. All six of us kids now have jobs to support ourselves, our families and various charities. We would not have this success if our parents had not sacrificed for us when we were little.

When I think back on the way we were, and compare it to the way we are, I often think about Mary, the mother of Jesus. She came from a poor family, but her parents taught her to live with faith and hope. Pregnant with Jesus, she visited Elizabeth and sang her Magnificat: "The Lord has lifted up the lowly. He has come to the help of his servant Israel."

The message of Our Lady of Guadalupe is that the Lord has lifted up the lowly. She appeared to the poor as one who was poor. She is the mother of a son who sacrificed his life to improve our life. She is a model for mothers and fathers today.

At times we all feel poor - we cannot pay our bills, we don't have enough friends, we cannot pray as we would like, we cannot find the job we want, we do not have good health. We are all poor in some way. Mary appeared at Tepeyac to reassure us that she understands our poverty. She identifies with our poverty. She says, "I know what it is like. Yet no poverty can keep you from my son. The Lord has lifted up the lowly. He has come to the help of his servant."

My brothers and sisters, we lack many things, but let us take comfort in what we have. We have a Savior, and we have a mother who understands our sufferings and brings us to him.