

Our Lady of Guadalupe

I have a niece who attends Sion grade school here in Kansas City. Each year her school invites grandparents or older relatives and friends to visit the school, see the classroom, meet the child's classmates, and talk with the teacher. My niece is the youngest of all my nieces and nephews. In fact, my oldest nephew, her first cousin, has children her age. All her grandparents have died. So she invited me to the school last month for an event the school calls "Grandfriends Day". Not all the children have grandparents, but the school wants all the children to have some friends who can come.

At the end of the afternoon, the children led a prayer service. My niece sang with the choir. In a room full of people, with lots of children wearing the same uniform, I thought it would be difficult to find my niece. But once my eye found her, she was easy to see amid all those people. It was as if she was the only child in the room. I could see her very clearly with my own eyes.

There are many miracles associated with Our Lady of Guadalupe. She appeared from heaven to Juan Diego not once, but on several occasions. She spoke in his language. She had the appearance of one of his own people. He found flowers at a place and time of year when there should have been none. When he opened his *tilma* in front of the archbishop, Mary's image appeared on the cloth. Another of the miracles associated with this image is in her eyes. Those who have studied enlarged photographs say you can see in Mary's eyes the image of a bearded man, the reflection of Juan Diego. She appeared miraculously before his eyes, and he appeared miraculously within her eyes.

For those who keep Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, as their spiritual mother, she is like any mother, grandmother or grandfriend. Whenever you are in her presence, she can see you. You appear within her eyes. No matter how large the room or how many people have gathered there, she can spot her own children because she loves them. The Book of Ecclesiastes includes the passage we heard as today's first reading. It is Wisdom who is speaking: "I am the mother of love.... In me is all the grace of the journey and the truth. Come to me, you who love me." Mary embodies this wisdom. She is the faithful mother of the Son of God. She has shown us the way of holiness and hope. She keeps watchful care over each one of us. We are in her eyes.

We keep Mary as our mother when we listen to the words of her Son, when we place our hope in the promises of Christ, and when we build a world for others, not just for ourselves. She is our guide. She is our friend. She is our model. She is our protector. She is our mother. She is our Lady of Guadalupe.