

# Prayer service for immigrants

December 12, 2025 on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Opening song: "[We who believe in freedom cannot rest](#)"

Reading from "[Am I Not Here? on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe?](#)" by Sister María Elena

## **Anto:**

The apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe of the Americas in Mexico in 1531, at the start of the era of evangelization, changed the course of our history and has had a lasting impact on our hearts. She comes to our aid, remains at our side, accompanies us and guides us to our encounter with Christ. She appeared as one of the people, accepting us as we accept her. "La Morenita" is one of us.

... This is the encounter that led our ancestors to accept the message of Jesus, from which a new culture emerged, one that continues to accept the message of faith that our "Virgen Morena" brought to these lands.

The Virgin said to Juan Diego: "Listen and understand, my littlest son, let nothing frighten and afflict you or trouble your heart ... Am I not here, I, who am your mother? Are you not under my shadow? Am I not your health? Are you not by chance held in my mantle?" ... These words help us to have hope, faith and strength. God hears the cry of his people; he is present with the Virgin of Guadalupe, sustaining us and giving us his unconditional love in the person of Christ. And just as the Virgin stays with us and sustains us, we have to do the same for each other.

"I am the mother of the inhabitants of these lands and of all those who come to me," she reminds us. She walks with us, but also reaches out to all those who need her most. She continues to ask us to do the same: to love each person—the immigrant, the disabled, the poor, the orphan, the widow, the unemployed, those who are different, with faces reflecting stories of pain, joys and hopes, those who we see during our daily routines. Our response to this situation, how we approach it, will depend on how we express ourselves as Christians, followers of Christ.

By her image appearing on Juan Diego's poncho, she linked her life, her heart, her soul to our simple and humble people, demonstrating her presence among us, so that when we contemplate her, we hear her message: "Am I not here, I, who am your mother?"

## **Response – read by all:**

*Today we ask for the intercession of our Mother, Our Lady of Guadalupe, who invites us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our country to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war.*

*Our Lady, help us by your grace: To embrace each of your children as our own brother and sister; and To welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs; To work to end fear and hostility toward migrants and all those who are vulnerable.*

*Amen.*

**Reading from Leviticus 19:33-34:**

When an alien resides with you in your land, do not mistreat such a one. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God. The Word of the Lord.

**Reading from the Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis on Blessed Virgin Mary of Guadalupe St. Peter's Basilica, Monday, December 12, 2022:**

Nearly five centuries ago, at a complicated and difficult time for the inhabitants of the new world, the Lord wanted to transform the upheaval brought about by the encounter between two different worlds into a recovery of meaning and dignity, into openness to the Gospel. This he did by sending Mary, his Mother... Thus, Our Lady of Guadalupe came to the blessed lands of America, presenting herself as the “Mother of the true God for whom we live” to console and attend to the needs of the little ones, without excluding anyone, to embrace them as a caring mother with her presence, love and consolation.

...This year we celebrate Guadalupe at a difficult time for humanity. It is a bitter time, filled with the rumbling of war, growing injustice, famine, poverty and suffering. And although this horizon seems bleak and disconcerting, with omens of even greater destruction and desolation, his divine love and his coming down to us tell us that this too is a propitious time of salvation, in which the Lord, through the Virgin Mother, continues to give us his Son, who calls us to fraternity, to set aside selfishness, indifference and enmity, inviting us to get involved with each other “without delay,” to go out to meet our brothers and sisters who have been forgotten and discarded by our consumerist and indifferent societies.

...Let us thank the Lord for the immense tenderness he has shown us by sending his Most Holy Mother to our American continent....As believers in Christ it is our responsibility to be credible witnesses of the love of Jesus Christ and decisive protagonists in building a new culture that cares, includes and rehabilitates.

**Response – read by all:**

*May Jesus Christ grant us, through the intercession of Our Mother of Guadalupe, the courage to stand for the forgotten and the vulnerable, especially migrants and refugees seeking shelter in our land, so that they too may know the love of Christ through us and through our actions.*

*Amen.*

**Reading from the Apostolic exhortation *Dilexi Te* of the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV:**

... The experience of migration accompanies the history of the People of God. Abraham sets out without knowing where he is going; Moses leads the pilgrim people through the desert; Mary and Joseph flee with the child Jesus to Egypt. Christ himself, who “came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him” (John 1:11), lived among us as a stranger. For this reason, the Church has always recognized in migrants a living presence of the Lord who, on the day of judgment, will say to those on his right: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Matthew 25:35)

... The Church’s tradition of working for and with migrants continues...Pope Francis has recalled that the Church’s mission to migrants and refugees is even broader, insisting that “our response to the challenges posed by contemporary migration can be summed up in four verbs: welcome, protect, promote and integrate. ... He also said: “Every human being is a child of God! He or she bears the image of Christ! We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved. They are an occasion that Providence gives us to help build a more just society, a more perfect democracy, a more united country, a more fraternal world and a more open and evangelical Christian community.” The Church, like a mother, accompanies those who are walking. Where the world sees threats, she sees children; where walls are built, she builds bridges. She knows that her proclamation of the Gospel is credible only when it is translated into gestures of closeness and welcome. And she knows that in every rejected migrant, it is Christ himself who knocks at the door of the community.

**Intercessions – Participants can rotate each taking a prayer to read:**

Together, we mourn the injustices and wounds inflicted on pilgrims seeking refuge.

Please respond, “Jesus, move us to action.”

For immigrants that have been kidnapped and disappeared

**ALL:** *Jesus, move us to action.*

For first generation American citizens, children of immigrants, and naturalized citizens, enduring the terror of being falsely detained or deported because of their accent or the color of their skin

**ALL:** *Jesus, move us to action.*

For children fearing that their parents will be kidnapped from them each time they separate

**ALL:** *Jesus, move us to action.*

For immigrants fearful of going into their own house of worship

**ALL:** *Jesus, move us to action.*

For students who are terrorized and blocked from receiving the education they deserve

**ALL:** *Jesus, move us to action.*

For mothers and fathers who have sacrificed everything in the name of hope for their families

**ALL:** *Jesus, move us to action.*

For all our migrant sisters and brothers currently being held in ICE detention centers without due process, and without sufficient food, water, and bedding

**ALL:** *Jesus, move us to action.*

For spending billions of dollars on building immigration detention centers, hiring extreme numbers of ICE agents and other ICE spending rather than funding the feeding of the hungry, housing the homeless and caring for the sick

**ALL:** *Jesus, move us to action.*

Our response to the following is *Hear our prayer*

For people of conscience around the country who have been brutalized violently for standing for their migrant sisters and brothers

**ALL:** *Hear our prayer*

For immigration lawyers of conscience and those within the legal system working tirelessly for due process and justice for all

**ALL:** *Hear our prayer*

For ICE agents and all border control and homeland security employees, that they may reject the narrative of fear and hatred and instead protect the lives and dignity of citizens and non-citizens alike

**ALL:** *Hear our prayer*

For all people of faith and conscience, that each may hear the cry of those who suffer and respond with welcome, protection, promotion, and integration

**ALL:** *Hear our prayer*

For all those gathered here today, that we greet each other with love and kindness, and share the same with migrants and refugees, and with all those who are vulnerable

**ALL:** *Hear our prayer*

Jesus, may your light and love fill the broken places in our hearts, and give us the grace to move us into action. Grant us the patience, strength, and courage to be channels of your peacemaking.

**ALL: Amen**

**Plea to political and immigration officials and agents:**

[This morning] [Today] we appeal to all political and immigration officials and agents who have devised, ordered and are carrying out ICE raids on immigrant communities across the United States. We remind you that we are all created in God's image and all life is sacred. God's love knows no borders. We implore you to respect the dignity of each person you encounter, especially the most vulnerable. We invite you to welcome our neighbors, not to arrest, detain and deport them. The cries of all those who live in fear and are detained rise to heaven more loudly each day. We implore all political leaders overseeing immigration policy and ICE agents: Stop the cruelty of the raids! Stop the repression! Release all those unjustly held captive, reunite families, and allow immigrants to get on a path to long-term status!

**Prayer – read by all:**

*God of all nations, we lift up to you our brothers and sisters who have left their homelands seeking safety.*

*We pray for immigrants everywhere, especially those who are vulnerable and marginalized. Be with them on their journey, Lord.*

*Protect them from harm, guide them to safe haven and open doors of opportunity filled with hope and dignity. Surround them with your love and the kindness of others.*

*We pray for our Church, that it may be a beacon of welcome and support for immigrants in our communities. Inspire us to show the same compassion and generosity that you have shown us.*

*Help us to embrace the richness of diversity and to work for justice for all.*

*May our parishes be places where immigrants find friendship, understanding and a spiritual home. May we walk with them, honoring their stories and embracing the beauty of their traditions.*

*We call upon the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, that her mantle of love enfolds all God's children in need of protection. We ask all this through Christ our Lord, who himself was a refugee and stranger in a foreign land.*

*Amen.*

**Closing prayer:**

God of mercy and compassion, You gift us with family, friends and homeland – true marks of our identity.

Keep us ever mindful of those who suffer because of dispossession, war, violence, homelessness, and exile, who are forced to be pilgrims and strangers while others occupy their lands.

Grant us, we pray, a far-reaching mercy and compassion, that we may open our hearts and homes more fully in welcome and care for the strangers and refugees in our midst.

Grant us the strength and courage to face the systems, policies, and structures of our day that divide the human family, and transform them with Your love. We ask this in Your name. Amen

**All: *Amen.***