



Dedicated to: Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn

St. Juan Diego Society Women's Center NEWSLETTER

Website: <http://www.jdswomenscenter.org>

We welcome any comments or suggestions that will improve this newsletter.

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A Joyful Reunion and a Baby Saved by Patsy Gonzalez, JDS volunteer

On a bright, summer morning in June, the St. Juan Diego Center director and volunteers were happily anticipating a visit from Fr. Jim Wynne from Bellevue, Illinois and his close friend, James Healy. Both gentlemen had been instrumental some years earlier in keeping the center open when it came dangerously close to shutting its doors forever from a lack of funds. Their generosity came through at the last minute. It was to be a Mass of joyful thanksgiving for Juan Diego's ongoing work with women in a crisis pregnancy.

A crisis call came in as we were preparing the table for mass. This was going to be a very difficult case as the young woman was pregnant from an extramarital affair. The prognosis for a hard cases like this is usually very poor. Her anguished husband was not supportive of seeing his wife see through her pregnancy. Armed with this information, Fr. Wynne said gravely, "We will say our Mass for this mother and her unborn child".

We freed up the counseling room for our Spanish speaking counselor, Veronica Sanchez Tovar and the young mother and set the table for Mass at the entrance of the center—it was tight but it was adequate. It seemed we would be hearing Mass while our counselor, Veronica, worked with the despondent woman in the counseling room.

The atmosphere was tense while Father set up the table. As he was arranging the table, we noticed that next to the crucifix, he also added a little picture which he explained was always with him during every Mass. Then he told us a wonderful story that we will never forget.

Many years ago, from 2001-2002, Fr. Wynne served as pastor at St. Anthony's parish in Anchorage, Alaska. While celebrating Mass, on the Feast of the Annunciation, he prayed privately before the consecration, "Jesus, would you ask God, our Father, to give me more faith, so after I say the words of consecration, I can believe more strongly that the bread and wine become You?" That prayer would be answered in an amazing way.

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*Sketch by Richard Sand
of Fr. Jim and Our Lady*

*Our Lady sent a favorite
son to do a big job.*

Mission From Mary by Elizabeth Shearer, JDS Volunteer

When your Mother calls, you know it's time to drop everything and come running. St. Juan Diego is a perfect example of heeding the call of Our Lady and of trying to be faithful to whatever your vocation in life might be. While most of us are probably not being called by Our Lady to convert a nation of millions like Juan Diego, we are being called daily to a deeper love and union with Jesus and His Mother.

My first real call from Our Lady came when I was in high school. It was a call to prayer. In high school, I allowed myself to wallow in teenage apathy. I didn't really ever pray unless I wanted something. Then at age 17 the walls came tumbling down. My father passed away, leaving my mother to raise six children alone. Feeling confused and scared about the future, I turned to the Rosary for comfort. I became transformed by it. My first mission was to have a deeper prayer life through the meditation of the life of Christ, through the eyes of His Mother in the Rosary.

The second time I heard Our Blessed Mother's call, was almost a decade later. One day in August 2002, I was in a Catholic bookstore. I was in line at the register, when a woman gently touched my arm and said, "You don't know me, but I felt like I was supposed to give this to you." She then gave me a commemorative holy card of the canonization of St. Juan Diego who was canonized two weeks before. I couldn't hide my astonishment. This woman could not have known that for weeks I had asked Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn, for a sign that she would answer my prayer to have a baby. After three years of marriage to my wonderful husband Andrew, we were childless. We were dealing with infertility issues as well as mourning the recent miscarriage of our baby, Isaac Gerard. I am so grateful for whatever promptings of the Holy Spirit led the woman to give me that holy card. Our Lady was asking me to trust. A year later, the holy card was something I lovingly carried with me to the hospital during the birth of our son Gabriel. Motherhood was an awesome and humbling experience which allowed me to love more...and to sleep less, than I ever thought possible. The next part of my mission involved the blossoming of a mother's heart, one of true self-sacrifice.

(Continued on Page 2)



Elizabeth Shearer

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A Joyful Reunion and a Baby Saved (continued from page 1)

A pious parishioner, Richard Sands, was totally unaware of Fr. Wynne's prayer. Richard had come to Anchorage as a flight instructor and was working there as a professor in college. Unknown to Father, this faithful man was also an accomplished artist.

A few days later, He approached the priest with an astonishing account of what he saw during Mass on the Feast of the Annunciation. As Father Wynne lifted up the Host during that Mass, he saw the Blessed Mother standing beside Fr. Jim, her eyes fixed on the Eucharist throughout the consecration. He handed Fr. Wynne a sketch of what he had seen. From that sketch, Richard provided him with a painting that hangs in his bedroom to this day—serving as a reminder that Our Lady is present at every Mass to adore her Son when the simple host becomes His Body and Blood.



Fr. Jim Wynne, OMI (3rd from left) and James Healy (far right) with JDS volunteers

The Mass, at the Juan Diego Center that morning, seemed suffused with a special grace for all of us. Father Wynne proudly wore his stole with Our Lady of Guadalupe's image on it; a reminder of the special attention she pays to the life saving work of the center. The fate of the unborn baby in the next room loomed heavily in our hearts throughout the Mass.

After the Mass, a young man and his little son came through the door to join his wife and Veronica in the counseling room. Grace did move his heart to consider life for his wife's unborn child. Father Wynne was invited to join the couple in the counseling room to bless the mother, her unborn child, the little family and to comfort the couple with encouraging words.

Father Jim Wynne, a generous priest who prays for the unborn, through his brief visit to Juan Diego participated in saving a life. Our Lady sent a favorite son to do a big job.

Mission From Mary (continued from Page 1)

Before we were parents, Andrew and I spent our free time doing Pro-Life work. At the time, we felt like we were really making a difference with our prayers and our works for the cause of Life. When Gabriel was born, "Pro-Life" took on a whole new meaning. Mothering required so much time and energy that after awhile our pro-life activities consisted almost entirely of feeding the baby and changing diapers. Our work (and blessings) increased as we welcomed two more children to the family. Later when we moved from Texas to the Bay area, I wanted to find some way to resume Pro-Life work, even with little ones at home. I had only to hear the name, *The St. Juan Diego Society Women's Center*, to know it was a sign from Our Lady. As a volunteer of the Center, I don't do a lot of counseling. My work usually involves donation-sorting and any of the other many tasks needed to keep the Center running. I am trying to take St. Thérèse's lead in finding joy in doing the little things!

It was through my work at the Juan Diego Center, that I became part of the team sponsoring the visit of the Missionary Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe recently. During the Image's visit here, I experienced a sweet miracle from the Blessed Mother. During veneration of the Image, I felt something when I put my hand just under Our Lady's sash. It felt like a baby *kicked*. When I told a friend about my experience she said, "Baby Jesus said hi to you!" Not being the kind of person who needs signs and wonders, I am accepting this experience as a loving embrace from Jesus and Mary, given even at a time I felt deficient in so many ways. More often than not my pride gets in the way and I fail to carry out my vocation as wife and mother in the way I should. It is then I am reminded of Juan Diego's words to Our Lady during an apparition, "...I am a nobody, I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf..." But the truth remains that even small ropes and tiny ladders have their uses. Didn't Christ come to us as a tiny baby? Doesn't He come to us, small and unassuming under the guise of bread in the Holy Eucharist? My latest mission is to continue to live out the first two... and to await any new orders with my tilma girded, ready to go up the mountain

An Appeal to All the Friends of the St. Juan Diego Women's Center

We urgently need your help to continue our mission.

The survival of the St. Juan Diego Women's Center rests solely on your generosity.

Your gift will save another baby. Thank you.

No amount, accompanied with love and prayers, is too small.

Make checks payable to: Juan Diego Society, 12 North White Road # 5, San Jose CA 95127

All donations are tax-deductible. Website: www.jdswomenscenter.org

The Visit

The St. Juan Diego Center was privileged to host a tour of the Missionary Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe from Aug. 27-Sept 15th. This authentic reproduction was no ordinary picture of Our Lady who appeared to Juan Diego in Mexico, but one that has traveled the country and the world to bring special graces to families, to the faithful and to promote the sanctity of life since 1991.

As a guardian who accompanied Our Lady on her special mission, I was overwhelmed by the images of the faithful who approached her picture—many burdened by life’s problems and others just delighted to pay a visit to their Mother who blessed their lives in many meaningful ways. Often, during her visit, people would share stories of her healing touch at a time when they struggled through a crisis.

A post-aborted mother, who had brought her sorrow to Our Lady of Guadalupe in the hope of being relieved from her indescribable guilt and pain, found a radical conversion and release from her spiritual burden shortly after her prayer. She came to thank Our Lady for her gift of healing. A young priest who lost his Irish “mother” (who had loved and mentored him through his seminary days) took his grief after her death to Our Lady. As he knelt before her image, she impressed distinctly in his heart that she would be, from that moment on, his Mother. He never lost the intimacy of her presence. He was thrilled to have the Image of Our Lady venerated in his church. Countless people who had had a personal encounter with the Mother of God could replicate both those stories.

Outside one of the abortion mills, a young mother who had changed her mind outside that same facility some weeks before, came to pray with the pro-lifers on the sidewalk. Our Lady surprised the group with two priests who appeared, completely unexpected. One priest blessed the young mother and consecrated her baby to Our Lady’s image right on the sidewalk, the other blessed the faithful who were there to pray.

Like many who have visited her shrine in Mexico, in spite of the sheer numbers of pilgrims, they felt “alone” in her presence. She had special graces for each and every soul that approached her in faith.

During her brief stay, she visited 12 parishes, 3 schools, 1 convent, 5 abortion mills, the Gabriel Project conference in San Francisco, the St. Juan Diego Center, and individual homes with terminally ill patients.

Like most pilgrimages, the best is yet to come. The graces Our Lady has showered on the throngs of souls who venerated her are yet to be seen as her marvels continue unfold in their lives. After all, a child who walks with his mother by his side always has the courage to face anything.



Fr. Joseph Pelagio Padit leading the Rosary in front of Planned Parenthood

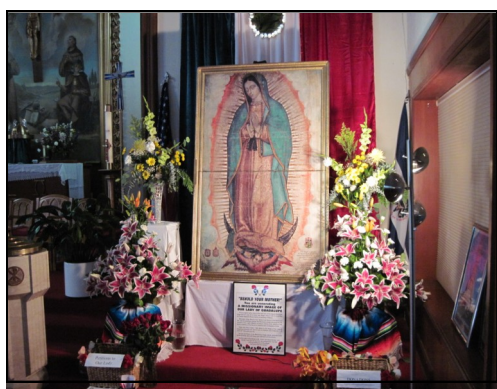
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School Children at Queen of Apostles Parish



St. Luke Parish, Foster City



St. Francis of Assisi Parish, East Palo Alto



Our Lady of Peace Parish, Santa Clara



An Encounter with Angels

Tips on Sidewalk Counseling
By Patsy Gonzalez

Based on her 17 years experience of saving babies; Patsy Gonzalez has written this handbook to help in forming more effective sidewalk counselors.

Now Available

*for more information call:
St. Juan Diego Women’s Center
(408) 258-2008*

Juan Diego Society
(St. Juan Diego Society Women's Center Newsletter)
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A SIDEWALK COUNSELOR'S PRAYER

O my Jesus, I consecrate to You today my efforts to intervene on behalf of Your unborn babies. Enlighten me with the right words to change a mother's heart, to dispel the fears that hinder her from welcoming her precious child. Give me Your heart to love her unconditionally, without judgment, that she may see in me Your infinite mercy. Let my presence be a sign of Your hope which will reverse a decision which will bring her untold suffering. If she does not choose life for her baby, let my presence be a sign of Your forgiveness so that in her pain, she will discover Your merciful love and forgiveness.

Like Your Mother who stood at the foot of Your cross, I stand at the foot of the cross of these babies that will die today. I entrust them to Mary, Your mother, who will lavish them with her maternal caresses that they did not receive from their earthly mothers. I desire Baptism for these little ones so they may enjoy eternal happiness with You.

Grant me the grace, dear Jesus, to never falter in my mission to defend Your unborn children and help me to grow in the virtues that will assist me in turning the hearts of these mothers in crisis towards Your truth. Expand my capacity to love so that not only mothers and babies will be the focus of my concern but also abortionists, pro-choice legislators, clinic workers and all those who perpetrate abortions because they are the ones in most need of the grace of Your conversion.

I offer to You all the persecutions, discomfort, humiliations and discouragement I may suffer. Allow them to humble me so that I may be more fruitful. Surround me with Your heavenly angels and saints to protect me from all harm and temptation to earthly pride.

And lastly, purify my intentions, dear Lord, that I may do all and suffer all for Your glory. I thank You for the gift of my life— and help me to make my life a gift to others. Amen