

WEEK THREE:

Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Call to Work for Justice

We look at the Bible's call for justice as we learn about a Mexican peasant's experiences and how they have become important to the people of Latin America and to advocates for justice throughout the world. Margarita Romo will share her work to secure justice for farmworkers.

SCRIPTURE READING: Amos 5:7-11, 18-24

⁷Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground! ⁸The one who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning, and darkens the day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the surface of the earth, the Lord is his name, ⁹who makes destruction flash out against the strong, so that destruction comes upon the fortress. ¹⁰They hate the one who reproves in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks the truth. ¹¹Therefore because you trample on the poor and take from them levies of grain, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine. ¹⁸Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord! Why do you want the day of the Lord? It is darkness, not light; ¹⁹as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake. ²⁰Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? ²¹I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. ²²Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. ²³Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. ²⁴But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream.



SCRIPTURE READING: LUKE 1:39-55



³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." ⁴⁶And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

WEEK THREE: REFLECTION

On December 9, 1531, soon after the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire, Juan Diego, a peasant who had only recently converted to the Catholic faith, saw a vision of Mary on a hill outside of Mexico City. Mary spoke to him in the language of the Aztec people and asked that a church be built in her honor, so that she could “exhibit her compassion” for them. When Juan Diego reported this event, the archbishop of Mexico City did not believe him and instructed him to ask the woman for a miraculous sign to prove her identity.

Diego had more encounters with Mary, who then, on December 12, placed an image of herself on the lining of his cloak. His archbishop was convinced by this miracle and a chapel was quickly built where the Virgin had asked. The site now contains a number of chapels and shrines, including a large basilica in which the miraculous image of Mary is displayed. The shrine is visited by twenty million pilgrims a year; nine million do so on or around December 12.

In the 19th century, Our Lady of Guadalupe became a symbol of the Mexican people in their struggles for independence from Spain. The Mexican novelist, Carlos Fuentes, once said that “you cannot truly be considered a Mexican unless you believe in the Virgin of Guadalupe.” In 1999, Pope John Paul II proclaimed her the “patroness of the Americas.” Latin American immigrants and refugees in the United States have great devotion for her. Images of Our Lady of Guadalupe can be found in Episcopal, Methodist, and Lutheran churches that minister to Hispanic communities.

This devotion to her, along with the words of the “Magnificat” and its promises of justice for the poor, inspired Cesar Chavez in his work to secure better wages for California farm workers in the 1960s. An image of the Virgin of Guadalupe was carried in a 300-mile march to the state capital. Artists have incorporated her image into works that demand justice for the poor, for women, and for immigrants.



Recommended Hymns:

ELW 239: [Hark, the Glad Sound!](#)

ELW 243: [Lost in the Night](#)

ELW 255: [There's a Voice in the Wilderness](#)

ELW 706: [The People Walk](#)

ELW 710: [Let Streams of Living Justice](#)

ACS 904: [Come to Be Our Hope, O Jesus](#)

ACS 1053: [A River Flows Through Babylon](#)

ACS 1078: [There is a Longing in Our Hearts](#)

Other Hymns and Songs:

[“Justicia”](#) by The Porter’s Gate

[“Un pueblo unido jamás será vencido”](#) by Sergio Ortega Alvarado

WEEK THREE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the significance of Mary communicating in the language of a conquered and oppressed people?
- The ELCA’s rite of baptism calls for us to “proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace.” How well are we incorporating justice into the work of the church?
- Can we do the work of justice without getting embroiled in politics?

INTERVIEW WITH MARGARITA ROMO



Margarita Romo is an activist for immigrant farmworkers in Florida. She was inducted into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame in 2013. [Learn more here.](#)