

Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Juan Diego (an Indian convert to Catholicism), as a woman resembling the people of the Mexican community. Her clothing contained the Gospel message written in Aztec codex. Those who saw the miraculous image on Juan Diego's tilma (cloak) were so profoundly impacted, that nine million converted to Christianity within eight years – practically the entire population of Mexico at the time! Through the collaboration of Juan Diego she unleashed a grass roots wave of evangelization, the likes of which have never been seen before or since.

Today, our world is in need Our Lady of Guadalupe's intervention once again. Times are dark and the faith of so many has been weakened or lost, putting many souls in jeopardy. Who can help us get back on track and spread the Gospel message anew if not the one who came at the inception of Christianity in the Americas, Our Lady of Guadalupe? She is The Patroness of the Americas, as well as The Star of the New Evangelization.

## WHAT will the Awakening Year look like?

There will be a variety of parish and diocesan events taking place throughout the year, culminating in a formal consecration of the diocese on December 12, 2019. Check with your parish for the local happenings. For diocesan info go to: [www.LightingHeartsOnFire.org](http://www.LightingHeartsOnFire.org)

I am personally inviting each person in our diocese to set out with a new sense of hope and expectation. God wants to do great things with us and through us. As I wrote in my pastoral letter *Lighting a Fire in the Heart of our world*, "I want us to become kindling so that we might be set on fire by the Holy Spirit."

-Bishop James F. Checchio  
Diocese of Metuchen

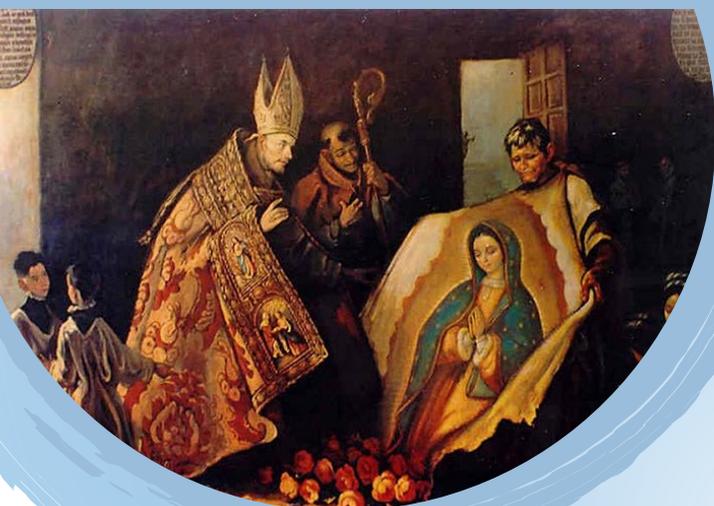


## Lighting Hearts on Fire



A diocesan consecration for  
a New Evangelization

Awakening Year  
December 12, 2018 – December 12, 2019



## WHY a Consecration?

### Because we need renewal.

"The time is ripe for renewal," states Bishop James Checchio in his pastoral letter, *Lighting a fire in the heart of our world*. After making a personal visit to all ninety parishes during his first year as shepherd of the Diocese of Metuchen, the bishop noted the numerous graces and blessings bestowed upon his flock, as well as symptoms of illness within the fold - many of the baptized are far from God and are not living vibrant faith lives with true apostolic zeal. (Only 15% of the baptized in the Diocese are practicing the Faith.)

Bishop Checchio's intention for this consecration is to ask for the graces needed for a New Evangelization and he is placing it under the patronage of Our Lady of Guadalupe. He wants it to stir up an **increased holiness of life, a renewed commitment to living the Gospel message to the full, and the enthusiastic willingness, among the faithful, to share that message with others.**

## WHAT is a Consecration?

Consecration is a word that is not often heard outside religious contexts, and even then, it may not be readily understood. **To be consecrated means to be set apart for a holy or transformative purpose.** Biblically speaking, consecrations were a means to respond to God's invitation to be "His people." Although you may never have thought about it or realized it, in the sacrament of baptism, you, too, were consecrated, set apart for God. You became a child of God called to be his disciple, his witness in the world. Moreover, you have been empowered by the Holy Spirit with supernatural gifts for the mission of evangelization. Have you used those gifts to bring others to Jesus?

Unfortunately, the reality is that many of us have not always lived up to the responsibilities and promises of our Baptismal consecration, clergy and laity alike. Sadly, moreover, many baptized Catholics have never fully known or felt a living relationship with God who made them and claims them as his very own. Because of so many forces in the world, an increasing number of Catholics have fallen away from the life of the Church: not living in an intimate, personal and vibrant relationship with Jesus.

So, today, perhaps more than ever before, we need to personally and communally renew our Catholic faith. We need to renew our baptismal consecration, determined to be disciples who will 'light a fire in the heart of our world.

## WHY a Marian Consecration?

A Marian consecration is basically a means of entrusting oneself to the Mother of God in the following of Her Son, Jesus. In this particular case, we want to consciously entrust our vocation of discipleship and our mission of evangelization to her.

Mary was the first disciple of Jesus, and she unhesitatingly responded '**Yes**', to the will of God in her life. She was completely receptive to God and her openness to 'let' His will be done in her life according to His plan is what we want to imitate. We want her to lead us in 'doing whatever he tells us to do' so that an authentic renewal of our hearts and our diocese can commence.

May each one of us respond as wholeheartedly as she did by saying, 'Let it be done to me according to your word, Lord.'

## WHY Our Lady of Guadalupe?

Nearly five hundred years ago the state of affairs in what is now known as Mexico City was grave. There was a clash of cultures unfolding and both sides seemed hopelessly lost in violent destruction. The darkness of sin had become a stronghold that not even the zeal of the Spanish missionaries could break. Then a desperate plea was uttered on the part of the bishop for some form of supernatural intervention and it was heard! The response from on High changed Mexico forever - God sent a mediator, the Blessed Virgin Mary.