CAMINO DE GUADALUPE

Homilies for the Novena and the Solemnity

December 3 to 12

Ten outlines: Gospel, central idea, four points to develop and a concrete proposal for life.

How to use this guide

Each outline starts from the Gospel of the Mass and then moves to Tepeyac, to the community and to daily life. The four points are designed for a homily of about eight minutes.

DECEMBER 3

Thursday of the First Week of Advent

Gospel: Mt 7:21, 24-27. The house built on rock withstands the rain, the floods and the wind.

Central idea: Faith is tested when the storm comes, and whoever built by listening and putting the Word into practice stands firm.

- Jesus describes two houses that look the same from the outside. The difference lies in the foundation, and the foundation is revealed when the rain, the floods and the wind come. Listening to the Word and putting it into practice is digging deep down to the rock. Advent begins by asking what we are building our lives on.
- Storms come to Juan Diego almost as soon as he receives his task. The bishop makes him wait, doubts him and asks for a sign. Then his uncle Juan Bernardino falls gravely ill, and Juan Diego goes around the hill so that the Lady will not stop him. Mary comes out to meet him on that very detour, asks him what is wrong, listens to him, comforts him and sends him out again. The difficulty becomes part of his journey with her.
- The people we serve do not grow in a straight line either. They get tired, they fall behind, they fail, or they have problems our programs did not foresee. With someone who did not follow through, the first question can be what happened to them along the way. Mary unites care and mission: she listens to Juan Diego and also sends him back to his task. Whoever was sustained in their own trial learns to sustain others without letting go of either the person or the mission.
- In everyday life, storms have names: an illness at home, a child drifting away, a lost job, a debt that keeps us awake at night. That is where we see what a family is built on. The rock is laid before the rain, with daily prayer, Sunday Mass and the habit of keeping our word. And when the storm comes, it is good to do what Juan Diego did: tell Mary what is happening, even if it means taking a detour.

FOR LIFE
This week, look for someone who has drifted away or fallen behind in the community, and first ask them what happened.

DECEMBER 4

Friday of the First Week of Advent

Gospel: Mt 9:27-31. Two blind men follow Jesus, crying out. He asks them whether they believe he can heal them, touches their eyes, and they see. He asks them to keep silent, and they go out and spread the news through the whole region.

Central idea: Whoever has been healed can no longer keep quiet about it.

- The blind men follow Jesus along the road and cry out their need. Jesus lets them come all the way into the house and there asks them a direct question: Do you believe that I can do this? The healing comes “according to your faith.” Advent is a time to tell Jesus, with the same simplicity, what we still cannot see.
- Jesus asks them to keep silent, and they go out and spread the news through the whole region. When someone has been touched by God’s love, that love seeks a way out. The same happens to Juan Diego before he receives any task: he hears singing on Tepeyac, sees the light, and his heart fills with joy. He wonders whether he deserves what he is seeing. The mission will come later, and it will be born of that joy.
- Evangelization often begins by explaining, and people do not listen because their hearts have not yet awakened. Mary opens Juan Diego’s heart with beauty: the singing, the light, a word in his own language. A parish can do something similar with a warm welcome, a worthy space or a celebration lived with joy. Beauty opens the door through which truth later enters.
- There is blindness at home too. Sometimes a husband does not see his wife’s fatigue, parents do not see what a child is going through, and we stop seeing the person who is beside us every day. This Advent we can ask Jesus, like the two blind men, to open our eyes to see our own. And when God grants us something, we can tell it simply to a relative, a neighbor or a coworker. Joy that is shared strengthens the faith of others.

FOR LIFE
At a gathering the parish already holds, add a single gesture of beauty or welcome, and see what it brings about.

DECEMBER 5

Saturday of the First Week of Advent

Gospel: Mt 9:35–10:1, 5a, 6-8. Jesus sees the crowds like sheep without a shepherd and is moved with pity. He asks for prayer for laborers for the harvest, calls the Twelve and sends them: without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.

Central idea: Jesus responds to people's need by gathering a group and sending them out together.

- Jesus goes around the towns and villages, and when he sees the crowds his heart is moved: they are troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. His first response is to ask for prayer for laborers for the harvest. His second is to call twelve, give them his authority and send them to the lost sheep. Jesus' compassion becomes a community that is sent.
- At Tepeyac, Mary also chooses a path through the Church. She could have shown herself to everyone at once; instead she sends Juan Diego to the bishop. Juan Diego speaks; Zumárraga listens, asks questions and asks for time. The messenger does not act alone, nor does the authority know everything in advance. Both have to listen, and the work passes through the Church.
- Whoever serves in isolation can do a great deal and still become fragile. They run the risk of mistaking their own inspiration for God's will, or of wearing themselves out without anyone noticing. An apostolic community is there so that we can return with what we have lived, be listened to, corrected and sent out again. Parish meetings can pause before a real situation and ask what God is doing there before handing out tasks. What was received freely is given freely, and it is given better together.
- Each of us has our own crowd: family, coworkers, neighbors on our street. Jesus sends us there too. What we received freely we can give freely, with a favor we do not charge for, time for someone who needs it, or a word of encouragement. And a family can live like that small community of the Twelve: praying together, talking over important decisions and listening to one another before deciding.

FOR LIFE
Bring an unresolved pastoral situation to the council or group, and together ask what God is doing there before proposing solutions.

DECEMBER 6

Second Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Gospel: Mk 1:1-8. John the Baptist prepares the way of the Lord in the desert. He announces one mightier who is coming after him, whose sandal straps he is not worthy to untie.

Central idea: The messenger prepares the way and steps aside so that the One who is coming may arrive.

- Mark opens his Gospel with a voice in the desert. John prepares the way by proclaiming conversion and baptism, and the people of Judea and Jerusalem come out to him. His whole mission points to another: one mightier than I is coming after me. Preparing the way of the Lord means leveling in our lives whatever keeps him from coming.
- Juan Diego sees himself as a little person, without the standing to present himself before a bishop. He asks Mary to send someone more important. She insists that he go himself, and he goes. In the end, when he opens his tilma before Zumárraga, the roses fall to the floor and everyone looks at the image. The messenger stays behind what he carries, just as the Baptist stays behind Jesus.
- Accepting a mission asks us to be available more than to imagine ourselves great. God works with our history, our gifts and also our limits. A simple cloth like the ayate can carry a sign far greater than itself. The apostle hands on what he has received, and the fruit belongs to God.
- In ordinary life, preparing the way of the Lord takes very concrete forms: seeking out someone we have fallen out with, paying what we owe, going to confession before Christmas, cutting back on shopping so that the celebration does not swallow up the Child. Parents also prepare the way for their children when they pray with them and take them to Mass. Like John, and like Juan Diego, it is about clearing the way and letting Jesus take the center.

FOR LIFE
Think of someone for whom you can prepare the way to God this week, with a visit, an invitation or a conversation, without trying to be in the spotlight.

DECEMBER 7

Monday of the Second Week of Advent

Gospel: Lk 5:17-26. Some men carry a paralyzed man, open up the roof and lower him in front of Jesus. Jesus sees their faith, forgives the man's sins and tells him: rise, pick up your stretcher and go home.

Central idea: The faith of some friends brings the sick man to Jesus, and Jesus raises him to his feet.

- The house is full and the door is blocked. The paralyzed man's friends climb onto the roof, remove the tiles and lower him on his stretcher in front of Jesus. Luke notes that Jesus saw their faith. Some people come to Christ because others carry them, and that borrowed faith also counts before God.
- Jesus first forgives and then says: rise, pick up your stretcher and go home. The man walks out on his own feet, glorifying God. At Tepeyac, Mary does something similar with Juan Bernardino. Juan Diego had changed his route to look for a priest, and Mary attends to that need as well. She heals the uncle, speaks to him, and the sick man becomes a witness to what happened. At Guadalupe, compassion is part of the mission.
- Mercy begins with the way we look: seeing a person where before we saw a problem. How we help also matters. We can do good while keeping the other person always beneath us, or help them in such a way that they discover their ability to stand on their own feet. When we serve, it is good to ask what the person needs and how they can take part. Jesus does not carry the healed man's stretcher: he hands it back to him.
- We have all carried a stretcher at some point: taking a relative to the doctor, caring for an elderly father, staying with a friend going through depression or an addiction. That fatigue is also faith that Jesus sees. And sometimes it is our turn to be on the stretcher and let ourselves be carried, which is harder. When we help at home or in the neighborhood, it is worth asking the other person what they can do, so that they do not feel they are only a burden.

FOR LIFE
Visit a sick or lonely person together with someone else from the community.

DECEMBER 8

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Solemnity)

Gospel: Lk 1:26-38. The angel greets Mary as full of grace. She asks, listens and answers: May it be done to me according to your word.

Central idea: God prepared Mary from the first instant to dwell in her, and her yes opens the door to that presence.

- The angel greets Mary with a new name: full of grace. In that greeting the Church recognizes what it celebrates today: that God preserved her from sin from the first instant of her existence. All of this happens in a small village in Galilee, in an ordinary house. God prepares his dwelling place long in advance and with great discretion.
- On the tilma the Virgin appears pregnant. The dark sash she wears at the waist was, for the ancient Mexicans, the sign of a woman expecting a child. The Lady of Tepeyac carries Christ within, as she carried him after her yes at Nazareth. Whoever looks at her attentively discovers that she comes to give her Son.
- What was fullness in Mary began in us with Baptism. Christ lives in the baptized, and the apostle carries Christ within before carrying ideas about him. There are days when those who serve feel empty, compare fruits or think everything depends on their own strength. Grace goes before them. Prayer and the sacraments help us recognize that life and let it grow until it reaches our thoughts, our affections and our way of serving.
- Nazareth was an unimportant village, and Mary's house was a house like any other. God also dwells in the kitchen where meals are prepared, in the field, in the workshop, on the bus ride home from work. Ordinary life becomes a place of encounter when it is lived with him. A good beginning is to offer the day each morning in a few words, as Mary did: here I am; may what you want be done in me.

FOR LIFE
Repeat during the day, especially before serving: "Christ lives in me; I want to let him grow."

DECEMBER 9

Wednesday of the Second Week of Advent · Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin

Gospel: Mt 11:28-30, from the weekday. Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. My yoke is easy, and my burden light.

Central idea: Jesus offers rest to those who are weary, and that rest begins with knowing we are loved.

- Jesus calls those who labor and are burdened and promises them rest. He offers a yoke, and it is an easy yoke, because the one who offers it is meek and humble of heart. The rest he gives is learned from him, by walking at his side. The invitation is for everyone, and the Church hears it today as it celebrates Saint Juan Diego.
- Mary calls Juan Diego tenderly: Juan, dearest Juan Diego. She calls him by name, asks him where he is going and enters his concrete path. Before entrusting him with anything, she treats him as a son. When he arrives anguished about his uncle, she reminds him that he is under her shadow and protection, and asks him: Am I not here, I who am your mother? It is the same rest that Jesus promises in this Gospel.
- Many wounds in service appear when we try to get from it what only God's love can give: recognition, a place, the assurance that we are worth something. Whoever rests in being a beloved child can hear a correction without feeling threatened and rejoice when someone else grows. They also begin to see others differently. Before the catechist, the cook or the troubled young man, there is a person with a history, fears and gifts. Formation often begins when someone discovers that they have been seen.
- People's weariness has many causes: long workdays, hours on public transportation, bills that will not add up, worries about the children. Jesus invites us to bring it to him, and Mary repeats that she is there. A while before an image of the Virgin, in church or at the little home altar, can be that rest. And in the family we can do what Mary did with Juan Diego: call each person by name, with affection, and value them for who they are before what they do.

FOR LIFE
Talk with someone in your own surroundings without asking anything of them, listen to something of their story, and tell them one concrete good you see in them.

Liturgical note: in 2025 the Basilica of Guadalupe used the weekday readings for this celebration. Check your diocesan Ordo to see whether the proper readings of the saint are used.

DECEMBER 10

Thursday of the Second Week of Advent

Gospel: Mt 11:11-15. Among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Central idea: In the Kingdom, greatness is measured by what God entrusts to the little ones.

- Jesus gives John the Baptist his highest praise: among those born of women there has been none greater. In the same sentence he adds that the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater. The greatness of the Kingdom comes from what God gives, and the little one who receives the Kingdom has more than the prophet who announced it.
- After the bishop's first refusal, Juan Diego asks Mary to entrust the message to someone of standing, known and respected. He describes himself as a man of the fields, of no importance. Mary answers that she has many servants, and that it is very necessary that he go himself. When the bishop doubts again, she does not replace him either: she sends him again and entrusts him with even more, the sign itself, which he will carry in his own tilma.
- Forming apostles calls for a quiet conversion in whoever coordinates. It is hard for us to delegate; we correct too soon, and it unsettles us when someone else does things differently. The apostle's question changes over time: from what can I do, to whom can I help to grow. Entrusting real responsibility to another means accepting that we become less indispensable. Mary did this with the youngest and dearest of her sons, and the work went forward.
- Many people feel they count for little: the grandfather who no longer works, the person who could not study, the woman who cleans, the child no one asks for an opinion. To God they count, and he entrusts great things to them, as he did to Juan Diego. At home we can practice this trust: giving children real tasks and letting them learn even if they make mistakes. And at work, recognizing what the person lowest on the ladder does well.

FOR LIFE
Give someone in the community, especially someone who usually gets left behind, a concrete responsibility for the December 12 celebrations, and let them do it their own way.

DECEMBER 11

Friday of the Second Week of Advent

Gospel: Mt 11:16-19. This generation is like children in the marketplace who do not dance to the flute or mourn to the dirge. They called John possessed and Jesus a glutton, but wisdom is vindicated by her works.

Central idea: Whoever looks for excuses not to believe always finds them. God keeps giving signs and lets his works speak.

- Jesus compares his generation to fickle children in the marketplace. They play the flute and no one dances; they sing a dirge and no one mourns. John came fasting and they called him possessed; the Son of Man came eating and drinking and they called him a glutton. Whoever does not want to believe always finds an excuse, and God keeps calling in many ways.
- Zumárraga listens to Juan Diego prudently and asks for a sign. Mary accepts the bishop's request and sends Juan Diego to the top of the hill, where, in the middle of December, on a land of stones and thorns, he finds roses of Castile. She herself arranges them in his tilma. God answers doubt with a work that can be seen and touched, and the bishop lets himself be led by what he receives.
- The last line of the Gospel gives a key: wisdom is vindicated by her works. The Church convinces more by works than by arguments: a community that welcomes well, a sick person visited, a poor person who gets back on their feet. In our personal lives, too, God leaves signs. Often we discover them only when we stop to look back.
- We all have excuses like those of the children in the marketplace: I do not have time for Mass, I will go to confession once things settle down, I pray in my own way. God answers with simple signs: restored health, a reconciliation, a job that came just in time. At the family dinner we can look back over the year and name one of those signs together. And at home, faith convinces through works: patience, forgiveness asked for, a shared table.

FOR LIFE
Look back over the year and name, alone or as a family, a concrete sign with which God answered a doubt or a request.

DECEMBER 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe (Solemnity in Mexico)

Gospel: Lk 1:26-38. The angel announces to Mary that she will conceive the Son of the Most High. She asks how this will be, hears that nothing is impossible for God, and answers: Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.

Central idea: Through Mary's yes, God finds a home among us, and at Tepeyac she asks for a house so that she may keep giving us her Son.

- Mary asks before she answers: How can this be? Her faith is willing to ask questions. The angel gives her a sign, Elizabeth is already with child in her old age, and reminds her that nothing is impossible for God. Then comes the yes: may it be done to me according to your word. From that moment God dwells in her womb and begins to live among us.
- At Tepeyac, too, there are questions, signs and a yes. Juan Diego wonders whether he deserves what he sees, the bishop asks for proof, and God answers with roses in December, where nothing could bloom. From the first encounter Mary expresses a desire: a little house in that place to show her love, her compassion, her help and her protection to all who seek her. She who gave God a dwelling place at Nazareth now asks for a house for her people.
- The little house of Tepeyac was built for others. There people are welcomed, listened to, consoled and sent, and the work remained open after Juan Diego. Every Christian community can be that little house: a family, a parish, a school, a small group. You recognize it because whoever arrives meets Christ and leaves with something to give. The best fruit of this novena will be that others, on getting to know us, will also want to say "I am Juan Diego."
- Every home can be a little house of the Virgin. It is one when there is a little altar where the family prays, a table with room for one more, a door that opens to the neighbor who needs something. Mary's yes is also said in small things: accepting a difficult relative, welcoming a child who was not expected, forgiving an old offense. There, in everyday life, Mary keeps showing her love and her consolation, as she promised at Tepeyac.

FOR LIFE
Decide as a community on a gesture for the coming year by which the parish or school can better welcome those who come for the first time.