

In 1531, when the indigenous peoples of Mexico were subjugated and the practice of human sacrifice was still a recent memory, the Mother of God appeared to St. Juan Diego as a pregnant native woman, now known as Our Lady of Guadalupe.

She sent him with miraculous flowers in his cloak to tell the bishop to build a church where people could receive her Son and her loving, tender care. When St. Juan Diego opened the cloak before the bishop, an image of Our Lady was revealed that remains to this day. The chapel was quickly built, millions embraced Christianity, and the Church increased its protection of the indigenous peoples.

By embracing the mission entrusted to him, St. Juan Diego helped bring Christ's transforming love to cultures gripped by oppression and death.

Today, we again see the dignity of human life disregarded. Unborn children are destroyed through abortion, and ill people are encouraged and assisted to take their own lives. How do we respond?

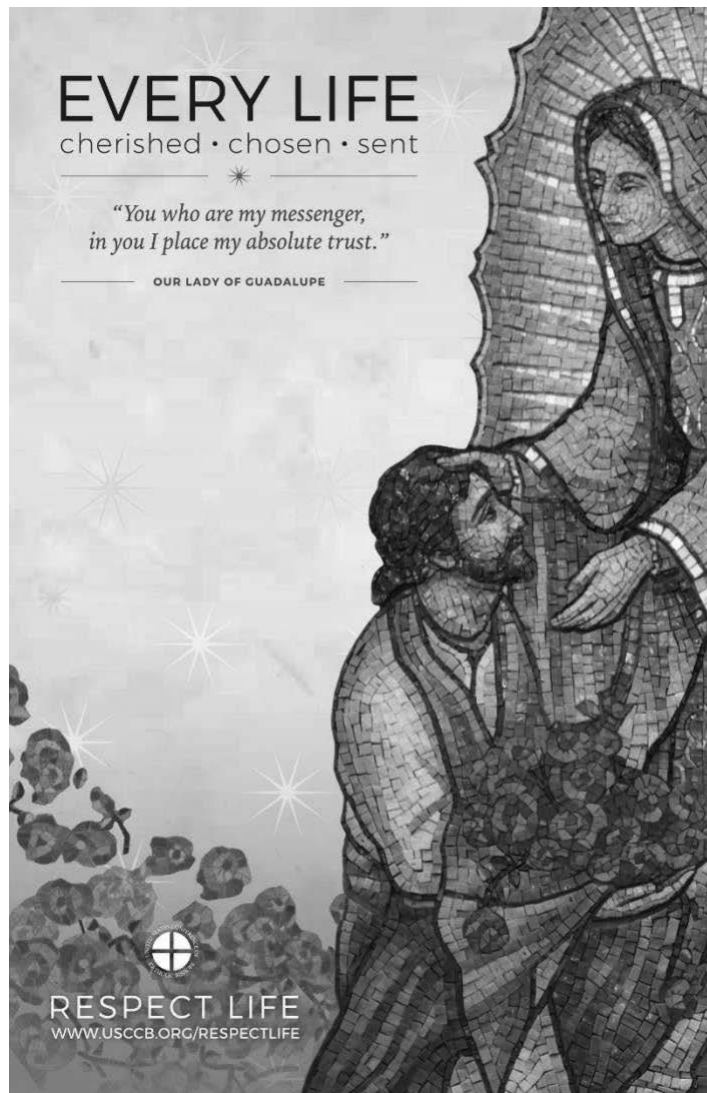
The essence of our identity is that we are created in God's image and likeness and loved by

Him. Nothing can diminish the priceless worth of any human life. Every person is **cherished**.

God creates every person for eternal union with Himself and continually invites us to embrace a loving relationship with Him. Every person is **chosen**.

We are called to be messengers of God's love, treating one another as cherished and chosen by Him. In doing so, we help build a culture that respects all human life. Every person is **sent**.

Like St. Juan Diego, let us embrace our daily mission to help others encounter God's transforming, life-giving love.



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