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## Homily: Christmas on Campus 2008

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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## Homily: Christmas on Campus 2008

12.18.2008 | Campus and Community, Catholic

*The 45th annual Christmas on Campus Dec. 11 ended with a Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Father Chris Wittmann, S.M., presided, with Father Chris Conlon, S.M., giving the homily. During the service, attendees heard the story of the Blessed Mother's appearance in 1531 to villager Juan Diego on a hill outside Mexico City. When the local bishop asked Juan Diego to substantiate the apparition with a sign, he did as the Blessed Mother instructed him. In the middle of winter, he gathered flowers in full bloom — far out of season — from the top of the hill. When Juan Diego delivered them to the bishop, the vivid image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was left on*

*the fabric of Juan Diego's garment. Many miracles have been attributed to the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and millions of pilgrims each year visit the basilica built on the same hill.*

### Christmas on Campus 2008

#### "It Begins With a Wish"

At the beginning of this celebration we heard the story of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

- It's a story rooted in a vision about the mother of God.
- A vision that promised hope and something that led to many miracles some 500 years ago and until our own time.
- A vision that some 6 million poor and needy people believed in, and the vision became a reality in their lives.

The interesting thing about the story is that the way Mary appeared to Juan Diego and the image on the mantle not as a European Madonna, but as an Aztec princess — and she spoke to him in his own language.

If I can play with the idea: What really made an impression on the people was that this lady was someone who understood them and who responded to their needs. She was the one who, at Cana, noticed the wine was running out. She identified with the need of those poor people. She was someone who first watched and listened — the way her son did.

- Jesus looked out at the people and saw they looked like sheep without a shepherd.
- He reached out and touched them, healing their hurts — and so did his followers.
- He encouraged them and calmed their fears — and so did his followers.
- Most of all, told them and showed them that God loved them.

And so it is that tonight, we gather around this word and recall that the spirit of Jesus is still alive among us today.

Forty-five years ago, another woman, Ellie Kurtz, also had a wish — a vision if you want — about how our UD community could reach out and touch people at this time of the year — touch children who were too poor to be able to experience personally the excitement and celebration of gifts and fun. So she called upon the University community, especially our students, to reach out and to give flesh to the words, "God loves you."

Our work for COC gives expression to how much our God loves us — and loves others through us.

It always has amazed me how dozens of our students begin the preparations at the end of the previous academic year, and then how at this extremely busy time of the semester, literally hundreds of students spend many hours putting together something which 45 years ago was little more than a dream — and finished with a Mass at Holy Angels.

I think, in terms of today's feast, this spirit of Jesus and Mary continues not only in our speech, but even more so in what we do and even when we do it.

Yes, we made a wish, and because our wish was backed up with lots of work rooted in loving care, the word continues to be made flesh and dwells among us - a high point in our year. We can say in truth:

"Lord it is good for us to be here."