

Cheyenne Boon:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Cheyenne Boon:

Welcome to morning prayers. Today's service will begin with a responsive reading from the black Appleton psalter book. Please rise in body or spirit, and join in reading Psalm 150, found on page 75.

Hallelujah. Praise God in the holy temple. Praise God in the firmament of power.

Congregation:

Praise God for every mighty act. Praise God's excellent greatness.

Cheyenne Boon:

Praise God with the blast of the ram's horn. Praise God with the lyre and harp.

Congregation:

Praise God with timbrel and dance. Praise God with strings and pipe.

Cheyenne Boon:

Praise God with resounding cymbals. Praise God with loud-playing cymbals.

Congregation:

Let everything that has breath praise God. Hallelujah.

Choir:

(singing)

Davíd Carrasco:

I want to begin by thanking the choir for the great beauty they bring to us this morning. I once heard the African American writer, Toni Morrison, speak about the contributions which immigrants often make to the country they migrate to. In a talk she gave in Guadalajara, Mexico, called *The Foreigner's Home*, she voiced the hope and gifts of migrants. She wrote and said, "After the 'Please, please, please let us in,' comes the other thing, the creative energy that is carried inside." One example of this creative energy that is carried inside is the story and devotions of the immigrant mother of Mexico, Our Lady of Guadalupe. Soon it will be December the 12th, which most of us identify as one more day in the march toward Christmas break or as part of Hanukkah or the holidays. But Mexicans bring another meaning to this date, filling it with spiritual significance and power. For we remember when the Virgin of Guadalupe had to beg to be led into the new world of the Americas. And when refused, persisted, and presented her gift of beauty, boundless love, and political wisdom for everyone.

Immigrants from Latin America bring more than hunger and hands, drugs and defeat, baseball and bongos. They bring spirit and spirits, imaginations and determination to bring out the creative energy

that is carried in wrists and wounds, minds and mouths, bones and brains. Yet they are picking, yes, they are picking the food, serving our meals, cleaning our dorms, taking care of children and tending gardens. They're also the young teachers, organizers, judges, doctors, entrepreneurs, singers, actors and professors. But they bring more. They bring the gift of her story.

In 1531 when Indigenous people were sickened by European diseases and dying in heaps in Mexico City, the [foreign language 00:07:54] Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin was walking just before dawn by the Hill of Tepeyac, where natives had worshiped their mother goddess before the Spaniards came. Beautiful bird song drew him up the hill where the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared and spoke to him in Nahuatl. The brown-skinned virgin said to him in his own language, "Go to the Spanish bishop and tell him to build me a little chapel here among the people so that I can give my love, protection and compassion to all the peoples of this land, all the peoples of different ancestors who suffer and would speak with me."

Juan Diego went to the bishop who rejected his story because he was an [foreign language 00:08:44]. He rejected the story that the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe sent him to the Spanish authorities with a message to build a chapel of love and affirmation. Returning to the hill where Our Lady of Guadalupe was waiting, he implored her, saying, "Don't send me. I'm a poor Indian, a back frame, a piece of rope, a wing, a nobody, and nobody will listen to me." She answered, "I could send a noble, but you, my most abandoned one, are in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms, and my love will be mediated through you."

Juan Diego went back to the bishop's palace, and again, he was rejected and ordered not to return without a miraculous sign from the so-called Virgin Mary of Guadalupe. When he reported his failure, when Juan Diego reported his failure, to Our Lady of Guadalupe, she told Diego to climb to the top of the hill where beautiful flowers were blooming out of season. He wrapped the flowers in his tilma, his Indian cloak. He went to the bishop's palace, and unraveling the cloak with flowers falling to the ground, the miraculous beautiful image of a dark-skinned Virgin Maria of Guadalupe appeared, driving the bishop to his knees and he wept for shame and joy. And the text ends, "Absolutely this entire city, with no exception, was deeply moved and came to see her precious image."

There are two messages that this story has for us today. The first is love. Divine love had to beg to be let in because it appeared in the form of a woman of color, speaking in a foreign language, appearing first to an Indigenous person of the lowest social standing. The second message that crosses the political borders of our democracy is that this immigrant mother spread her garment of compassion for all the peoples, all the different groups of peoples in the land. Guadalupe does not defend one group alone, but stands up against all the born-again fascisms, antisemitism, anti-Arabism, anti-gayism, anti-transism, anti-Latino American-ism, anti-African Americanism and more. Yet you notice, she has color. And what of that? It's an ambiguous color. Is she Indian or Mestizo, red or brown?

If we were to ask her how dark or light she was, she might answer, "I am dark. I'm darker than the other dark. I'm the dark inside the dark. How light am I? I am light. I'm lighter than the other light. I am the light inside the light. What colors am I? I am colored. I'm more colorful than the other colors. I'm the color inside the color."

This is the Guadalupe version of what Toni Morrison calls the other thing, the creative energy that is carried inside. She is both a foreigner at home among us, and she is one of the very few homes in which all of us are welcome to dwell together. So isn't it strangely wonderful that the story of this brown mother, Guadalupe, who my daughter calls the number one mother, is migrating to Harvard with the plea to let her in so that we can release the creative energy of love for everyone?

(singing)

Cheyenne Boon:

Now, if you'd please rise in body or spirit and join in the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying:

Congregation:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Now please join in singing hymn number 97, The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came.

Congregation/Choir

(singing)

Cheyenne Boon:

And now as we go into this day, let us bless and keep one another. Let us make peace. Let us be at peace. May it be so, and may the church say amen.

Congregation:

Amen.