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Feliz Fiesta

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

My liturgical calendar tells me that today is Gaudete Sunday. But the non-stop ringing of bells at the church down the street tells me that it is really the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

I am not going to try and compete with the excellent coverage and commentary provided by Rocco Palmo at Whispers in the Loggia. Check it out to see the face of the American Church in the decades ahead.

What is most striking about the clips Rocco has is the devotion, the highly personalized identification, with the Virgin that you see in the faces - and in the costumes - of those celebrating the feast. Listen to the words of the Mexican pop star Lucero as she speaks to the Virgin before singing her song, facing the tilma in the basilica in Guadalupe. This is their day because it is her day. I can't think of anything like it, certainly nothing so vibrant, in my church experiences growing up. Latinos do not only pray to the Virgin, they do not only celebrate this day, they LOVE the Virgin.

Tonight, there will be fireworks at the church down the street. We are baby-sitting a friend's three year old today and I told her we will stop by the church and see more flowers than any of us have ever seen at one place outside of the Rose Bowl Parade. All day, parishioners and day laborers pull up to the church and go in to place bouquets of flowers in front of the tilma. And, we will be having quesadillas with pernil that I made yesterday to mark the occasion. My New Year's resolution is to brush up my Spanish so that I can begin doing some posts in Spanish next year, especially on subjects that are important to Latinos. Get with the program Anglos! The church of tomorrow belongs to the Virgin of Guadalupe and that means the Church is in good hands.

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