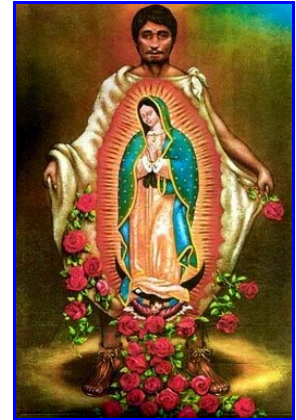


“EL ZORRO” & THE GODDESS

WAS THE FIRST “EL ZORRO” THE HERETIC WHO LAUNCHED MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE UNDER THE BANNER OF THE DIVINE VIRGIN MOTHER ?

Our Lady of Gaudalupe -- *La Virgen de Gaudalupe* - played a significant role in the history of Mexico and the independence movement led by Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, the historical “El Zorro”. At right is a rendition of the Native Mexican, San Juan Diego, revealing *La Virgen* in spite of the initial opposition of the colonial Spanish Church authorities. Today she reigns in the hearts of millions as the “The Queen of the Americas”. In our view, she also represents what Hindus, Vedantists, Pagans, Gnostics and others call the “Mother of the Universe”, “Divine Mother” and “Divine Sophia” (Wisdom). Eastern Buddhists call her “Quan Yin” (“Kwan Yin”, “Quan the Am”, etc.) – the Goddess or Bodhisattva of Compassion. She *is* Wisdom & Compassion – and the Native Indigenous Earth Mother now asserting herself to rescue and re-balance the misguided human world after millennia of oppressive & violent Mother-Earth-raping patriarchy.



Above: San Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, Honorable Speaking Eagle, revealing La Virgen de Guadalupe

The arrival of Cristobal Colon in 1492 immediately launched a process of “Colon-ization” that introduced slavery, dispossession, cultural suppression, and devastating pandemics to the Indigenous Peoples of what became referred to as *Nueva España*, “New Spain”. The appearance of the Goddess, the Divine Mother, now known as **Our Lady of Guadalupe**, on a revered Aztec hilltop, to Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, a Native convert to Catholicism, brought a period of relative peace and harmony – and inter-marriage -- between the conquerors and the conquered. This gave rise to the inter-racial, inter-cultural *mestizos* as a new people, leading ultimately to a new Mexican national identity.

In 1810, a secular (parish) priest launched the Mexican Independence Movement. He was **Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla**. His revolution called and fought for returning land to the Native population and the abolition of slavery. Hidalgo waged his revolution under the banner of **Our Lady of Guadalupe**. In 1811, Hidalgo was captured and executed by Spanish forces. The next uprising took place between 1811 and 1815, and was led by another Catholic priest and devotee of Our Lady, José Maria Morelos, who was shot when the rebellion failed. The Independence Movement finally succeeded in 1821, and Hidalgo is to this day honored as the Father of Mexican Independence. *La Zambra del Zorro* takes place in the context of this historic struggle for social justice and Mexican independence. In our ballet, *El Zorro* the Fox fights, and dances, in partnership with others, including women – brave allies and comrades in the social movement for autonomy, equity, equality, diversity and liberty.

Email Messages of Mark A. Sullivan to Zorro Productions, Inc.

January 19, 2024 (excerpt)

I'm excited to tell you that, as it seems to me, I may have stumbled upon or "discovered" the original historical person dubbed "El Zorro". I found this fact in a biography first published in 1910. My theory is that McCulley had accessed this biography before writing "The Curse of Capistrano" in 1919. But so far I've not seen this historical person mentioned in any of the books I have about Zorro, including Sandra Curtis's excellent *Zorro Unmasked: The Official History*, which of course I know Zorro Productions caused to be published in 1998. In any case, I hope to disclose this historical "El Zorro" in the programme booklet for *La Zambra del Zorro*.

January 21, 2024

Dear John & Otto,

Thank you for your messages and for working with us. I'm actually eager to get your feedback about my "secret" or "discovery". I see that I actually already referred to it in the long email of 1/19/24...(but without quoting the source). I won't feel bad if you reply with reasons that my "theory" may not be valid, or that you already knew about it, etc. In any case, the story of *La Zambra del Zorro* incorporates it, as I'm now elaborating.

First, here's something that came to my attention in an email of two years ago:

"Mexico, called Nueva España — "New Spain" — was under Spanish rule for three centuries. When, in 1531, the **"Virgin of Guadalupe"** appeared to an indigenous man named Juan Diego, saying she was the mother of God and that he should build a church in her honor, it became a rallying call for the evangelization of Mexico — and birthed a national Catholic symbol that was separate from Spain. That fact would become important in 1810, when a revolt led by a priest, Father **Miguel Hidalgo**, took up the Virgin as their banner. By 1821, the insurgents had solidified their War of Independence from Spain, creating a "Declaration of Independence" that set the stage for the modern Mexican republic."

In light of this, I wanted to somehow include both the Virgin of Guadalupe and Miguel Hidalgo as part of the historic backdrop or context of our story. So Hidalgo and the Virgin will appear in the prologue of *La Zambra del Zorro*, while the Virgin (in the guise of a Native woman as Osamu envisions) makes one or two mysterious appearances during the story, and the climax will symbolically connect back to Hidalgo's independence movement. I started do a little research into both figures, and acquired a reprint of *The Life and Times of Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla* by Arthur Howard Noll and A. Philip McMahon, originally published in 1910. Finally, I started to actually read it. Lo and behold, here is what I found (put in bold to separate it from my own verbose commentary):

"We are told that he [Hidalgo] studies philosophy and theology at Valladolid, and that he excelled by reason of his talent, and received from his college companions the nickname of "el Zorro" (the Fox), implying superior sagacity and shrewdness rather than low cunning." -- pgs. 6-7.

"In 1805 he made a journey to the City of Mexico... We have seen that he had been in the city on two previous occasions for the purpose of receiving his degrees from the University. That was more than thirty years before.... The journey... was usually made with companions for mutual protection, for most of the roads were infested by robbers. But we must imagine Don Miguel, "el Zorro" watchful of all that was going on about him, quick to receive impressions from what he saw, and closely observant of everything that might aid him in his large plans for the betterment of his people." -- pg. 35.

"He was of few words in the ordinary affairs of life, but animated when he was engaged in argument which he carried on in academic style. His dress was that of the average secular clergy of the provinces. He wore a cloak of black wollen, knee breeches, waistcoat and jacket of a kind of goods which comes from India and is called "rompacoche," a round hat, and he carried with him a long cane. His college nickname of *El Zorro* clung to him throughout his life, and is said to have faithfully characterized him." -- pgs. 124-5.

Attached are three, of so many, artists' renderings of Hidalgo, plus a photo of his Virgin del Guadalupe banner that is preserved for posterity in Mexico.

My "secret", "discovery", or "theory" is that Johnston McCulley had access to this biography of Hidalgo and took inspiration and the name El Zorro from it. He may also have applied certain characteristics of the appearance (dress) and personality of Hidalgo to Zorro and Diego respectively. In fact, the evolution of Diego evolves from the original "Diego the Fop" in *The Mark of Zorro* ("played to the hilt" by Douglas Fairbanks & Tyrone Power), to Diego the respectful but passionate scholar for justice (which guy Williams played so well), to the Renaissance man a la Leonardo Da Vinci (as played by Duncan Regehr).

This evolution, likely by coincidence (unless you know differently), gradually made Don Diego to more and more resemble the historical Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla. And like Hidalgo's cause was taken up and carried on by his comrades-in-arms, Diego (as played brilliantly by Anthony Hopkins) passes on the cause and "office" of *El Zorro* to his daughter Elena and Alejandro Murieta (also brilliantly played by Catherine Zeta-Jones and Antonio Banderas), who both also inherit the de la Vega name and fortune.

An aside: One notes that Alejandro Murieta takes on the disguise of "Don Alejandro del Castillo y Garcia" with the coincidental echo or similarity of "Castillo y" with "y Castilla". One also looks hopefully toward the rumored return of Banderas and Zeta-Jones in order to further pass on "The Baton of Zorro" -- perhaps a good title for the film if it is produced. But I digress :)

This biography of Don Miguel Hidalgo y Castilla also hints that he, although a secular priest, had affairs with women during his life -- something that at least two Zorro portrayals flirted with (pun intended). I'm thinking of Tyrone Power in *The Mark of Zorro* as well as George Hamilton in *Zorro, the Gay Blade*.

Hidalgo, along with his associates, was very much influenced by the classical liberal ideals of the American and French revolutions, including the separation of church and state. This was also true of many leaders of the national independence and anti-colonial-slavery movements in the Caribbean and the Central and South American republics. Hidalgo fought against the caste system of New Spain, for the equal rights of the Natives and all the people. Women had more rights in independent Mexico (including California) both after the break from Spain and before annexation by the United States. Mexico abolished slavery in 1829, which Hidalgo has called for, along with "*Tierra y Libertad*" -- Land & Liberty" -- appropriate for American Liberty Ballet, don't you think?

Also apropos, women had more rights in independent Mexico (including California) both after the break from Spain and BEFORE annexation by the United States -- which proved to be a violent and catastrophic economic, social and cultural set-back for the Natives and Spanish-speaking Californians, fueled by virulent white racism and "Manifest Destiny" -- the origins and shadow side of our current political turmoil. Or so it seems to me.

Hidalgo led a popular revolution for independence from Spain in 1810-11, and was captured and eventually executed by firing squad, but his movement was carried on by others until Mexico, which included all of California, won independence in 1821. He was dubbed "the father of Mexican independence" and is honored by a national holiday in Mexico to this day. My/our fictional story will suggest that Padre (or Fray) Felipe had been one of Hidalgo's university companions and shared the dream of independence for Mexico. And so when Diego del la Vega sets out to oppose the local injustices of the Spanish rulers, he dubs Diego "El Zorro" in honor of Hidalgo.

Well, this is my "discovery" -- or at least "theory" -- of where McCulley got the idea to call his hero "El Zorro". And *La Zambra del Zorro* will fictionalize this possible connection to, or inspiration of, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla and his struggle for independence holding aloft the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe. She is universally recognized as the patron saint of the oppressed Natives -- their own "Lady Liberty". Similarly *El Zorro* is their mythologized champion -- and our own Diego will be of mixed race. The climax of our story has Diego's friends and allies, in mysterious if not mystic solidarity, becoming a band of Zorros to rescue him from the clutches of the Alcalde and Capitan who represent the Spanish colonial powers. It ends in a triumph including the presence of our Latina Lady Liberty -- "Our Lady of Guadalupe" -- who is today officially considered the "Queen of All the Americas".

All this much more than I intended to write. Please forgive me. And there are other aspects of *La Zambra del Zorro* not covered here -- the role of women, romance and humor, and the fabulous music, dancing and choreography that Osamu is pulling together. So thank you, John and Otto, for reading this through. If we succeed on stage this March 2nd & 3rd, it will be our Vision and Dream come true.

Any response would be welcomed and most appreciated --
it would mean a lot.

Sincerely,

Mark (of Zorro -- couldn't resist ;)

cc. Otto, Valerie, Osamu.

NOTE: Minor corrections & stylistic touches were added to the email text above.



IMAGES: Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (left). Leading the independence movement under the banner of La Virgen de Guadalupe (lower right). The banner, preserved for posterity in Mexico City (upper right). "Thank you, Mother." Tyrone Power in the 1940 film, "The Mark of Zorro" (lower left). **Plus:** The heroic image of Hidalgo on page 6.



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Guadalupe: Mother of the New Creation, by Virgil Elizondo, is a book we encountered in our research. Here is an excerpt from the Introduction (pp.xiii-xiv):

The Uniqueness of the Historical Moment.

The story of Our Lady of Guadalupe really begins in 1492, one of the most fascinating years in all of history. The last crusade had come to an end with the battle of Granada on January 2, 1492. Christian Spain was euphoric over the military triumph of the Christians over the Moors. The Christian empire, radiating from the Catholic monarchs of Spain, now felt a divine mandate to expand to the rest of the non-Christian world for the greater honor and glory of God. Wealth, power, and eternal salvation would henceforth become the motivating forces for the new enterprises to come.

* * *

For the natives of the Americas, 1492 . . . was the beginning of the invasion of gun-bearing gods-turned-monsters from unknown lands against whom their own weapons and tactics of war seemed totally impotent. That year was the beginning of their condemnation to hard labor, humiliation, destruction, sickness, enslavement, and massive death.

Along with the cruel monsters came new "priests" – ambiguous figures who seemed different from the monsters . . . Some of these priests lived among the natives, learned their languages and customs, were concerned for their welfare, cared for them, and tried to befriend

them. Nevertheless, they sought to destroy that which was most sacred to the natives: the religious traditions of their ancestors. Without these, the natives' world would have no meaning or value; only chaos and emptiness would reign The year 1492 marks the beginning of the hurricane that continues to be so destructive of the native life – natural and human – of the Americas.

Guadalupe: Mother of the New Creation, 1996, Maryknoll, ISBN 978-1570751103, can be purchased from: <https://www.amazon.com/Guadalupe-Creation-Virgilio-P-Elizondo/>

Taking a transcultural approach we may well regard Our Lady of Guadalupe as a manifestation of the same archetypal reality as Kuan Yin (Chinese), *Quan the Am* (Vietnamese), or *Kannon* (Japanese) – the transgender bodhisattva and/or Goddess of wisdom and compassion “who hears the cries of the world.”

From among the many sources, we quote from another book – this one addressing the present, even urgent, spiritual relevance of Our Lady of Guadalupe: *Gnosis of Guadalupe: a mystical path of the Mother* by **Tau Malachi & Elder Gideon**. Suffice it to say that the excerpts shown below help to inform and inspire our own inclusion of Our Lady in *El Zambra del Zorro*.

“I am the Compassionate Mother of you and your people here in this land, and of all other people who love me, call to me, search for me and confide in me. I will listen to their pain, their sorrow and suffering, and hear their cries and pleas from their misery, and I will comfort them and heal them, bless them, and grant them boons, all in the Name of God, the True Light, that Holy Light I am.” (pp. 11-12)

Guadalupe is the herald of a new age or new aeon, a new understanding of Heaven and Earth, and she is the birther of a new Humanity. Her birth pangs continue. We are in the womb of the Mother, and the trials and tribulations we face are the tumult of birth, which also are the pains of her Holy child being born. The pains of the Holy Mother and her Child are one and the same. The revelation of Mother God happens in the midst of a dark time; it happens in the midst of the darkness of winter near the winter solstice, and it arises out of the subtle light of predawn, just as night is giving way to the day. All of this suggests the womb of the Holy Mother and her conception, gestation and giving birth. Although she is the Forever Whole and Perfect Maiden, which is to say the Virgin, she is pregnant and she is giving birth to the Child of Light, a Divine and Supernal Humanity.

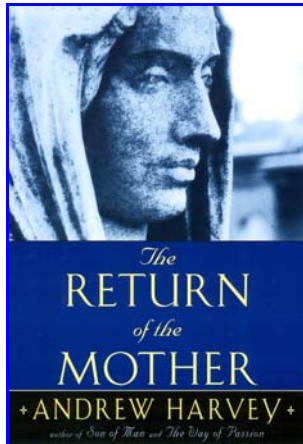
As she reveals herself to us, she who is God the Mother, we and our world on the one hand are the Child to whom she is giving birth; on the other hand, we are called as her midwives, the conscious agents in the manifestation of her desire, the union of Heaven and Earth, the generation of a New Heaven and New Earth, and New Humanity. Just like Juan Diego, we are called to an active and dynamic surrender, to embody the Mother's Force, the Light from above, and with the reception of that Holy and Supernal Light, we are called to awaken, to actualize and realize the Fiery Intelligence, the power of the Holy Spirit in us.

Gnosis of Guadalupe goes on about Juan Diego, and here is a very brief snippet from page 27:

Juan Diego . . . is not exactly an “ordinary” peasant, for according to the tradition he encounters the Virgin on his way to attend to his spiritual essence and sacred tasks He is a shaman warrior, a great holy person whose name is Cuauhtlatatzin: Honorable Speaking Eagle.

Gnosis of Guadalupe, ISBN 978-0692810958, 2016, EPS Pres@yahoo.com; www.sophian.org; 1530 pB
Lane # S1619, Wichita Falls, Texas 76302

The Return of the Mother – perhaps “the Mother of all books about the Mother” – is by pioneering scholar, gay mystic, spiritual teacher, and ecological activist, **Andrew Harvey**. *Excerpts*:



How then can we most subtly define this sacred feminine? In some way defining it is, of course, impossible, because the essence of the sacred feminine is subtlety, flexibility, and mystery, and its essential work is the constantly and wittily radiant overcoming of the definitions of the mind by love and immediate naked knowledge of the interdependence of all things and all beings. But there are, in fact, three central powers in the feminine, all of which interrelate and interpenetrate, and exploring these in some detail can begin to “open up the territory.”

The first of these laws I call a *knowledge of the unity of all life*, a knowledge that all life is inherently sacred and one, a knowledge of the unity behind all multiplicity. . . .

The second law of the sacred feminine, and, of course, all these laws interpenetrate and illuminate each other, is what I call the *law of rhythm*. The sacred feminine awakens us to the knowledge that the universe has its own laws and harmonies which are already whole and perfect, and which, if we are to live wisely, we have to intuit, revere, and follow. . . .

The laws of nature and of life, then, are essentially rhythmic. . . . This awareness of the rhythms of the universe is simply not accessible to masculine powers of reason and will on their own; they are blinded by their impatient desire to know definitely, to define, manipulate, and control. * But the feminine side of the psyche is aware of the rhythms of life quite naturally, is in fact the “voice” of these rhythms, and spontaneously receives, accepts, welcomes, and interprets guidance. If we wish to heal the natural world that we are in imminent danger of destroying, we are going to have to listen in radical humility to its voices, attend faithfully to its rhythms, and enact quickly what they tell us. This listening, this feminine attention, is essential to our survival, and is one of the crucial gifts of the Mother.**

The third law of the sacred feminine is what I call the *love of the dance*. I think it is essential when we talk of the restoration of the sacred feminine to make clear that what is being restored is a totally unmorbid, healthy, exuberant, sensual, ecstatic vision of life. One that does *not* separate mind and body, that does not separate body and spirit, that accepts in wonder and joy the ordeals and conditions of this life; that, in fact, knows this life to be an unbroken flow of normal miracle.*** This is the glorious immanent *and* transcendent knowledge that a restoration of the sacred feminine would give us. A knowledge that, like the aborigines, is at once home in the invisible light-ridden world of the Ancestors and in the tiniest rocks in front of them as they walk, and in the sounds of the insects singing only one song: the song of the Divine Mother.

NOTES TO HERESY! * In *La Zambra del Zorro*, this is symbolized, by the masculine heroes, including Diego/Zorro, needing to be (and being) rescued by the feminine ones, who act in egalitarian unison under the banner of *La Virgen de Guadalupe*.

**This is portrayed, in *La Zambra del Zorro*, by the collective call to action via the unifying dream that is induced by the Native/Tongva and Roma/Gypsy shamanistic women leaders.

***This “*love of the dance*” is, of course, expressed by the exuberant music and choreography of *La Zambra del Zorro*.

The Return of the Mother, © Andrew Harvey, 1995, Frog, Ltd.; pgs. 23-26.

The 2000 Penguin paperback edition: ISBN 978-1585420735

THE GYPSY GODDESS: Last but not least, we must never forget the significance of the Roma version(s) of the Goddess, perhaps originally derived from Vedic and Hindu deities, *Saraswati* and *Kali*:

The original language of the Gypsies is derived from an old Indian language.... the word Kali means both "gypsy woman" and "the black one".... It is Sara-Kali, Queen of the Gypsies, who resides in the crypt of this ancient church by the sea [Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in southern France].

Each year in late May, the Gypsies gather from all over Europe to venerate St. Sara. "The poor are honored, the rejected welcomed, and unloved comforted" at this feast.... In a grand procession culminating in days of praying and feasting, they dress the statue in layers of clothes and jewels and take her down to the sea.

"Most of the stories center around the three Marys – Mary Jacobe, Mary Salome, and Mary Magdalene...."

– Longing for Darkness: Tara and the Black Madonna © China Galland, 1990, 2007. Penguin Books. ISBN 978-0-14-019566-8. Page 176.

DATURA, OR JIMSON WEED, IN NATIVE AMERICAN RITUAL & SPIRITUALITY

La Zambra del Zorro includes a scene (# 22) in which the Gypsy and Tongva Native matriarchs ritually burn datura, or jimson weed, in a communal cave with incantations in search of a vision. According to *Astrotheology & Shamanism* by Jan Irvin & Andrew Rutajit, "Datura is famous to cultures in Europe, India, and North America." (pg. 50, ISBN 978-1439222430, www.gnosticmedia.com). So, in our story, Roma/Gypsies who had migrated from India through Europe to North America would have been familiar with it. The technical name of Datura is *D. Wrightii*, after the person who classified it.



Above right: Unfolding Sacred Datura buds painted on a Hohokam Sacaton red-on-buff plate, ca. 950-1150 AD. A common decorative motif on ancient Native American pottery. [Heresy! Notes a similarity to nature-oriented Celtic stone imagery.]

From Wikipedia: Common names in the US include "sacred thorn-apple" or "hairy thornapple", and sometimes "western Jimson weed" because of its resemblance to *Datura stramonium* due to both species having toothed leaves. Anglophone settlers in California often called it "Indian whiskey" because of its ritual intoxicating use by many tribes; the name "sacred datura" has the same origin. Other common names include "Indian apple", "California jimson weed" and "nightshade" (not to be confused with *Solanum*). The Tongva call it *manit* and the Chumash *momoy*. In Mexico, people call this and similar species *tolguacha*. or *toloache*.



Description

It is a vigorous herbaceous perennial that grows 30 cm to 1.5 m tall and wide. The leaves are broad and rounded at the base, tapering to a point, often with wavy margins. The flowers are the most striking feature, being sweetly fragrant white trumpets up to 20 cm (7.9 in) long, sometimes tinted purple, especially at the margin. Five narrow points are spaced symmetrically around the rim. The plants often can be seen as a ground vine in habit, growing close to the ground and spreading in a very exposed environment with full direct sunlight (cleared roadside). *D. Wrightii*, blooms

from April through October. In clear weather, flowers open in the morning and evening and close during the heat of the day (depending on water availability); in cloudy weather, they may open earlier and last longer. The seeds are borne in a spiny, globular capsule 3 to 4 cm in diameter, which opens when fully ripe.



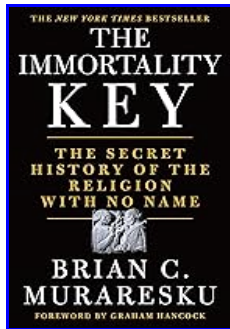
Distribution and habitat

Datura wrightii is found in northern Mexico and the adjoining southwestern U. S. states, as far north as Eastern Washington, in open / disturbed land and along roadsides with well-drained (sandy) soils. However it is perhaps most naturally abundant in the region of Southern California.

Toxicity

All parts of *Datura* plants contain dangerous levels of anticholinergic tropane alkaloids and may be fatal if ingested by humans, livestock, or pets. In some places, it is prohibited to buy, sell or cultivate *Datura* plants.
 – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datura_wrightii

In *La Zambra del Zorro*, the indigenous people are the Tongva, while in Isabel Allende's novel *Zorro*, the indigenous people are the Chumash. Here is what one researcher on the religious use of psychedelics wrote about the use of *Datura* by the Chumash in the environment of a cave.



"In the National Geographic article from November 2020, lead archeologist David Robinson from the University of Central Lancashire explains the Chumash reverence for *datura*, beloved as a grandmother named *momoy*. Historically, the roots of the psychedelic plant were decocted into a holy potion during cult rituals and vision quests, where "initiates underwent ordeals and received esoteric instruction" to "establish contact with a supernatural guardian" or "communicate with the spirits of the dead." For those who had properly prepared for the experience, *datura* was said to enable the drinker "to see beyond surface appearances into the true nature of things" – both in this reality and "the other world" beyond space and time.... opinions are mixed whether the cave was a sanctuary for individuals seeking spiritual guidance, or adolescent groups engage in communal initiation rites. Either way, the parallels to the visionary journeys of the San in South Africa are self-evident."

– (pg. 395), *Brian C. Muraresku, The Immortality Key: The Secret History of the Religion with No Name*, © 2020, 2023, St. Martin's Griffin, ISBN 798-1-250-80398-6.

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The team of Uehara & Sullivan recommends donations be made to **Casa Juan Diego**, a Catholic Worker House of Hospitality that is doing the compassionate work of Our Lady of Guadalupe north of the Mexico-US border in Texas. From its tabloid periodical:

"Casa Juan Diego was founded in 1980 following the Catholic Worker model of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, to serve immigrants and refugees and the poor. From one small house it has grown to ten houses. Casa Juan Diego publishes a newspaper, the *Houston Catholic Worker*, four times a year to share the values of the Catholic Worker movement and the stories of the immigrants and refugees uprooted by the realities of the global economy."



HOUSTON CATHOLIC WORKER

a publication of

Casa Juan Diego P.O.Box 70113,
 Houston, TX 77270 Tel: 713-869-7376 info@cjd.org / www.cjd.org

Image above: "Comfort of Immigrants" from Casa Juan Diego. Artist: Angel Valdez