

GUARDIAN ANGELS

Catholic Church & School

CHASKA, MINNESOTA * WWW.GACHASKA.ORG * (952) 227-4000



Las Mañanitas

The church was packed, the only light provided by candles, heartfelt songs before the Virgin joined prayers rising with the incense, it was Saturday Dec. 12th, the Feast of Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of all the Americas.

Oh yes, it was also 5 a.m.!

Alas, I wasn't there. I had set my alarm for 4:30 a.m. that morning, and had evidently hit the snooze button several times before coming out of my sleep coma ... *after* the prayer and serenade service, called Mañanitas, was finished. Thank goodness, Fr. Thomas Joseph, our parish's sacramental minister at our noon Spanish-language Mass, was there. Along with a ton of other people.

As you can see from these photos – taken by Josh Hed – it was an incredibly beautiful moment. And there were more than Spanish-speaking parishioners packing the church. Thanks to Tami Hed's leadership, more and more of our English-speaking youth are attending such culturally rich moments, as well as our noon Spanish-language Masses on Sunday. And the parish's students weren't the only ones.

In fact, over the months, I've noticed more and more non-Spanish-speaking adult parishioners attending our noon Masses, using the missal that has the readings and Mass parts in both English and Spanish. Fr. Thomas is also going bilingual during his homilies. This is very good for younger Latinos who primarily speak English, and for visitors and older non-Spanish-

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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who primarily speak English, and for visitors and older non-Spanish-speaking parishioners.

Before Tami Hed began building bridges for our youth, I was surprised that our public school and G.A. School students were studying Spanish in the classroom, but not joining in our parish's many Spanish-language events. Now they are. Muchas gracias, Tami!

Next year, I will set two alarm clocks for 4:30 a.m., with one clock far from my hand's reach. And I have a feeling that even more people with a love for Our Lady will be joining the crowd next Dec. 12th.

Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe, Reina de las Americas

If you thought the church was packed on Saturday morning, you should've seen it at noon this past Sunday!

The festivities in honor of Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe – Queen of all the Americas – continued on Sunday with a procession of the Virgin through the streets of Chaska around the church.

Our parish's German-immigrant ancestors would've been proud, as the procession of Her statue would remind them of their own devotional processions over a century ago.

I was carrying roses for Our Lady, and I could sense the chills and thrills going through people as people yelled "Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!" and "Viva la Reina de las Americas!" As the statue squeezed through the entrance of our church, I was reminded of how tourists spend thousands to travel to Spain or Italy or Mexico to see such pageantry and religiosity.

And we get to see it and participate in it right here in Carver County.

Leading the procession were the traditional Indian dancers --"Matachines" – those representing the ancient Aztec people to whom Our Lady appeared in the 1500s. There was of course someone representing St. Juan Diego, to whom Mary gave the miraculous image of Herself, painted on his tilma or mantel (This is the only genuine image of Mary in the world).

Over 500 people squeezed into the church after Mary. It really was amazing to see. And I look forward to it next year. Fortunately, I don't have to set my alarm for 4:30 a.m. to participate again next year. The celebrations will be around noon again.

All non-Spanish-speaking parishioners are encouraged to join our Spanish-speaking parishioners on this cultural adventure around Dec. 12, 2010, and give honor and devotion to the Queen of all of us. ~ Fr. Paul

