

# ***CHILDREN OF THE SUN***

**THE STORY OF  
OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE**

**a musical drama**

**book and lyrics by William Luce  
Dramaturg: Victor Chacon  
Music by Henry Mollicone**

**TEXT: COPYRIGHT 2009 BY WILLIAM LUCE  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
Children of the Sun**

## Prologue

**Time:** It is the year 1525 in the Aztec town of Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City). Early evening.

**Setting:** It is only three years since Spain's conquest and destruction of the Aztec kingdom. The Church's missionaries have but recently arrived in the wake of the Conquistadors.

*At Rise: The stage is dark. We hear distant sounds of gun fire, the clash of swords, the noise of cannon, musket fire, horses' hooves and screaming, dying voices.*

*A funnel of light suddenly illuminates a figure of a man facing the audience. He is a Conquistador, uniformed in helmet, breastplate, doublet, breeches and leather boots. He is CAPTAIN DE VACA. He holds a sword before him, as if threatening the audience. Underscoring battle sounds soften.*

**Captain:** *(Sung)*

In 1519 from Old Castile  
we came with musket and sword of steel -  
outnumbered were we a thousand to one  
by heathen Children of the Sun -  
Children of the Sun.  
We killed the King and we took his gold -  
we ravaged and pillaged young and old -  
we watched them die - a thousandfold -  
they screamed and cried - their kingdom dead -  
these Children of the Sun.  
Now joy is lost and hope is fled  
and sorrow thrives both far and near -  
for in their hearts we planted fear -  
we stole their wealth and raped the land  
of the Children of the Sun!

*Light fades on the Captain.*

## Scene 1

*Orchestral music begins a brief introduction, as a sanctus bell rings for worship. We see a small flame ignite in the darkness, whereupon light comes up, revealing MOTHER SUPERIOR lighting a candle on the altar. Dreamlike, devout, a choir of NUNS glides in to join her.*

**Mother Superior & Nuns:** *(Sung)*

Ave Maria  
gratia plena  
Dominus tecum  
Benedicta tu  
in mulieribus  
et benedictus  
fructus ventris tui Jesus  
Sancta Maria  
Mater Dei  
Ora pro nobis  
peccatoribus  
Nunc et in  
Hora mortis nostrae  
Amen.

*The Nuns kneel in a tableau of silent prayer, as Mother Superior exits, leaning on her cane. The LORD BISHOP, Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga, priest of the Order of St. Francis, enters with the conquistador. Captain. Both men pay obeisance before the gold crucifix. In admiration, the Captain runs his fingers over it.*

**Captain:** A wonderful thing is gold -  
like mint from the Sun.

**Lord Bishop:** A gift from Cortés -  
melted down and fashioned into *this* -  
praise the Lord - praise the Lord.

**Captain:** And what did it *used* to be?

**Lord Bishop:** An Aztec idol, ages old  
from Montezuma's hoard of gold -  
a graven image wrought in hell  
for every heathen infidel.

*The Captain grasps the crucifix.*

**Captain:** To this New World

I came for gold  
on a creaking, leaking galleon -  
through jungle hell -  
through swamp, on foot -  
both sick and lame  
for gold I came.

*Lord Bishop touches the crucifix also.*

**Lord Bishop:** And I came for souls -  
I came in the name of God.

**Captain:** I came for GOLD!

**Lord Bishop:** In the name of GOD!

**Captain:** For GOLD!

**Lord Bishop:** For GOD!

**Captain:** For GOLD!

*Together, they lift high the crucifix.*

**Both:** And GLORY - and GLORY - and GLORY!

*The crucifix is replaced on the altar, and the two men exit together, talking and laughing as they pass the praying Nuns. When the men are out of sight, some Nuns exit. Four nuns remain. They proceed to dust and sweep - while one polishes the crucifix.*

**Sister Alisa:** I know we all abhor gossip -

**Sister Paloma:** Of course.

**Sister Delfina:** I certainly do.

*Unseen by the Nuns, Mother Superior re-enters and listens.*

**Sister Alisa:** (Pause) Yesterday I was dusting the candelabrum by the confessional, and -

**Sister Teresa:** Yes?

**Sister Delfina:** Tell us -

**Sister Paloma:** What?

**Sister Teresa:** Tell us -

**Sister Alisa:** I accidentally overheard the Captain's confession to Lord Bishop.

**Sister Paloma:** Really?

**Sister Alisa:** I positively cringed at all the things that he told him.

**Sister Teresa:** Go on -

**Sister Delfina:** Tell us -

**Sister Paloma:** Please -

**Sister Teresa:** Tell us!

**Sister Alisa:** (*Smugly*) The Confessional is sacred. (*Pause*) But - the Captain is going to need a lot of Hail Marys.

**Sister Paloma:** How many?

**Sister Alisa:** I'd say about a thousand.

*They giggle hysterically.*

**Sister Delfina:** Did he mention *me*?

**Sister Teresa:** Why would he mention *you* in *his* Confession?

**Sister Delfina:** He winked at me once.

**Sister Paloma:** And what did you do?

**Sister Delfina:** I winked back at him.

**Sisters Paloma, Teresa & Alisa:** Oh, go on - tell us, please - tell us! tell us!

*Mother Superior, with an air of court martial, slams her cane loudly on the altar floor, frightening the Nuns.*

**Mother Superior:** (*Sternly*) Sister Delfina!

**Sister Delfina:** (*Trembling*) Yes, Mother.

**Mother Superior:** Get your sorry self to Confession - now!

*Sister Delfina exits.*

**Mother Superior:** Blessed are the pure in heart - (*To the Nuns*) - let us join together in the sixth Beatitude.

**All Four:** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Amen.

*They cross themselves.*

**Mother Superior:** Keep that in mind when you're with Sister Delfina. Now go to the cupboard and bring the baptism things.

*They cross to the cupboard, as Lord Bishop solemnly enters, wearing a violet stole over his vestments. With him is an Aztec man recently renamed JUAN DIEGO. He wears peasant clothes.*

**Lord Bishop:** (*To Mother Superior*) It seems we have a new convert. He has come to be baptized.

**Mother Superior:** Splendid. What is your name?

**Juan Diego:** Talking Eagle.

**Mother Superior:** No, dear - not your Aztec name. Weren't you given a Spanish name?

**Juan Diego:** I forget.

**Lord Bishop:** His new name is Juan Diego.

**Juan Diego:** *(Tentative)* Juan Diego.

**Mother Superior:** *(Thoughtful)* Juan Diego.

*On an altar table the Nuns are placing a vial of holy oil, a small cruse of consecrated water, a white stole, a white linen cloth and a candle.*

**Lord Bishop:** Let us begin - stand here, my son.

**Nuns & OS Angels:** Alleluia!

**Lord Bishop:** This moment in your life will never come again.

*Sister Alisa hands the vial of oil to Lord Bishop..*

**Nuns & OS Angels:** Alleluia!

**Lord Bishop:** Do you renounce Satan?

**Juan Diego:** I do renounce him.

**Lord Bishop:** I thereby anoint you with the oil of salvation.

**Nuns & OS Angels:** Alleluia!

*Lord Bishop anoints him. Sister Paloma takes the violet stole from Lord Bishop's shoulders, and Sister Teresa replaces it with the white stole.*

**Lord Bishop:** Do you believe in God, the only Cause and -

**Juan Diego:** *(Interrupting)* I do believe.

**Lord Bishop:** *(Testy)* I'm not finished -  
*(Resuming at a faster pace)*

. . . the only Cause and Creator?  
Jesus, His only begotten Son?  
the Holy Ghost?  
the Catholic Church?  
communion of saints?  
forgiveness of sins?  
Resurrection?  
life everlasting?  
you may answer now.

**Juan Diego:** I do believe.

**Lord Bishop:** Will you be baptized?

**Juan Diego:** I will.

*Sister Paloma gives the cruse to Lord Bishop, who  
sprinkles the holy water on Juan's head three times.*

**Lord Bishop:** I baptize you in the name of the Father + and of the  
Son + and of the Holy Ghost + Amen.

**Nuns & OS Angels:** Alleluia!

*Juan kneels. Sister Alisa hands the white cloth to Lord  
Bishop. He places it on Juan's head as a symbol of  
purification.*

**Lord Bishop:** *(Lifting him up)* Peace be with you, Juan Diego.

**Juan Diego:** *(Rising)* Thank you, Your Grace.

*Lord Bishop exits. Sister Paloma returns the vial and  
cruse to the cupboard. Mother Superior hands Juan a  
lighted candle.*

**Mother Superior:** *(Tenderly)* This little flame tells you that Jesus  
will guide your way.

*Followed by her Nuns, Mother Superior exits carrying the  
violet stole. Juan Diego is alone. He gazes into the bright  
flame.*

**Juan Diego:**  
This is the shining Hour, the radiant Day -

I'm standing in the light of God at last -  
the ravens in this land will fly away -  
my little flame will burn away the past.  
The serpent god of sacrifice is dead -  
the taste of fear no longer fills my mouth -  
the rains of God are falling on my head  
and healing winds are blowing from the South.  
Take care, my heart, for I am just a man -  
A man who marvels at the wildest things on earth -  
where raging rivers flow, I will go -  
where kingdoms die, there I will find new birth.

*Juan Diego exits, still holding the candle.*

*Stage dark.*

## Scene 2

**Time:** Six years later, December 22, 1531. Dawn.

**Setting:** The hill country of Tepeyac, formerly sacred to the Aztecs as the home of their Goddess Tonanzin, whose name means "Mother."

*We hear a soft vocalise, as Juan Diego enters on his way to Saturday morning mass. He wears a tilma (poncho). He pauses, hearing an echoing sound drifting down - the quiet flurry of wings. Juan looks up to the summit of Tepeyac. Curious, he slowly begins climbing. As he approaches the summit, a feather drifts down and lands at his feet. He picks it up and cradles it in his hand.*

**Juan Diego:** A feather from Heaven -  
is this the shadow of God  
or am I dreaming?

*Out of the silence, we hear a delicate cascading bell tree*

*sound, followed by a woman's sweet voice singing. It is  
LA SEÑORA.*

**La Señora:** Juanito - my dear Juanito.

*Juan feels no fear, only awe - as a beautiful young Woman  
appears, walking toward him. She is dressed in the robes of  
an Aztec princess and Her skin is the color of bronze. Three  
ANGELS are with Her.*

**Juan Diego:** (*Awed*) The Lady of Heaven - and with *Angels*.

**Angels:** Ave.

**La Señora:** Juanito - where were you off to?

**Juan Diego:** To Saturday Morning Mass in honor of . . . *YOU*.  
But You are *here*.

**Angels:** Ave.

**La Señora:** (*Smiling*) Yes, so you can skip Morning Mass.

**Juan Diego:** (*Falling to his knees*) What is happening? Forgive  
me, my Lady.

**Angels:** Ave.

**La Señora:** Oh, Juanito - beloved son -  
I have watched and have prayed for you -  
dream with Me now a dream of hope -  
I have come to restore  
what is yours in the eyes of God -  
and it's you who will help  
to make My dream come true.

*(Juan jumps to his feet)*

**Juan Diego:** Mother of Paradise -  
how can this be real? Are You sure  
You have the right man?

**Angels:** Ave.

**La Señora:** Oh, Juanito - beloved one -  
you shall bathe in the tears of God  
as will your *people* in His tears.

**Angels:** Ave.

**La Señora:** I have come - come for them -  
come to finish what was begun -  
that again they be called  
the Children of the Sun.

**Juan Diego:** How can I serve you, Mother -  
and why - why do You honor me so? Why?

**La Señora:** Long ago I saw the light of God in you.

**Angels:** Alleluia.

**La Señora:** I want to see a shrine here -  
where hearts that yearn for God  
can pray to Me. *Alleluia.*

**Juan Diego:** You want a church here? A shrine for you?

**La Señora:** God's love I'll bring to them -  
and the love of His only Son - you must go  
now to meet with the Lord Bishop. Go to him.

**Juan Diego:** But he won't believe me -  
Please, send someone noble.

**La Señora:** Juanito, Your words will be freighted with  
power, for I shall be in your heart - tell him  
that your people are My children now - they  
were cruelly conquered - it's time they  
felt the healing compassion of the Church - tell  
His Grace you are the Emissary of Santa Maria,  
Mother of God. Now let me hear you say it.

**Juan Diego:** What is an Emissary?

**Angel 1:** Envoy

**Angel 2:** Ambassador

**Angel 3:** Messenger

**Juan Diego:** (*Clearing throat*) I am the Messenger -

**La Señora:** You are the *Emissary.*  
(*Angels lift praying hands*)

**Juan Diego:** I am the Emissary.

**Angel 1:** With a little more authority

**Angel 2:** Command

**Angel 3:** Confidence

**Juan Diego:** (*Stately*) I am the Emissary of Santa Maria,  
Mother of God.

**La Señora:** (*Smiling*) Excellent.  
(*The Angels applaud*)

**Juan Diego:** (*Encouraged*) My Lady, I will do what you ask.

(*He bows and exits*)

### Scene 3

**Time:** Later that day.

**Setting:** The Lord Bishop is at his desk. Behind him is a religious painting of the 16th century Spanish School. At a table stacked high with documents and scrolls, a young Seminarian Scribe (non-speaking role) is copying a letter.

**Lord Bishop:** (*Impassioned*)

I don't want to go back to Spain -

I know who's behind this -

it's one of the nobles -

I've had trouble from him

since I first arrived -

he's poisoned the King's mind against me -

the Court wants me back in Spain

for one reason -

to denounce me!

(*To the Scribe*)

Is the document ready?

(*The Scribe nods*)

Bring it here.

(*The Lord Bishop signs and seals the letter*)

Now go - take it to Captain de Vaca. He sets out for  
Veracruz in five days on his way to Spain.

*The Scribe exits. Lord Bishop paces the floor.*

**Lord Bishop:** What have I done

to deserve this pain -  
why am I being recalled to Spain?  
Oh, Lord, did I fail -  
have I fallen away from You -  
did I fail to believe your voice -  
did I fail to behold your face?  
Dear Lord, did I fall -  
did I fall from Your grace -  
did I fail to discern Your plan -  
have I fallen away -  
did I fail to discern Your plan?

*Ecclesiastical theme. Mother Superior knocks and enters.*

**Mother Superior:** Well?

**Lord Bishop:** Is Juan Diego still waiting?

**Mother Superior:** For three hours.

**Lord Bishop:** *(Sighing)* Very well. Send him in.

*Ecclesiastical theme resumes quietly, underscoring the following. Mother Superior directs Juan into the room, then exits. Juan bows low to Lord Bishop, who remains seated. Music out, dialogue only.*

**Lord Bishop:** You wanted to see me?

**Juan Diego:** Yes, your Grace. I am the emiss - emissa - I was baptized by you six years ago.

**Lord Bishop:** Yes. I remember. You were the first of the converts. Since then, there have been very few.

**Juan Diego:** *(Abruptly)* I am the Emissary of Santa Maria, Mother of God!

**Lord Bishop:** *(Half rising)* You are what?

**Juan Diego:** The Queen of Heaven has appeared to me.

**Lord Bishop:** *(Sneering)* Has She indeed?

**Juan Diego:** Out of the heart of God She came like a white dove flying -

Angels of peace were gathered round  
and the Saints were sighing -

**Lord Bishop:** Why would she come to *only you*?

**Juan Diego:** (*Nervously*) I have no idea -

**Lord Bishop:** (*Becoming angry*) If She were *really* Santa Maria -  
what could She possibly have to say to you?

*Music begins.*

**Juan Diego:** These are the words she said to me -  
(*Sung*)

“Go to the Priest who rules New Spain -  
tell him it’s you that I ordain -  
tell him to build a Shrine for Me and build it for Eternity.”

**Lord Bishop:** (*Spoken sarcastically*)  
And how does She plan  
to pay for this?

**Juan Diego:** She said the Church must pay.

**Archbishop:** Why?

**Juan Diego:** (*Sung*)  
Because you killed our priests  
and burned five hundred temples -  
and took our Aztec gods away -  
our Holy Mother wants one thing -  
a Shrine where we can pray!

*The Lord Bishop is taken aback by Juan’s courage.*

**Lord Bishop:** So what does she look like -  
this Mother of Heaven? Tell me now - what does  
She look like, this Mother of God?

**Juan Diego:** Beauty like Hers I’ve never seen -  
cool and lovely - pure, serene -  
auras of light about Her head -  
Angels were attending - with silver wings outspread.

**Lord Bishop:** (*Calculating*) I want you to prove it - that She is  
Our Lady, The Mother of God. Prove this to me! Without it, you

are to me just another dreamer in this fallen kingdom of dreamers.  
(*Shouting*) Bring me proof! Now GO!

*Juan is dumbfounded. Proof? He bows and exits, as we lose the office. Now in a limbo area, Juan stands in frustration and despair, unsure of himself and of what he saw and heard. We hear gusts of wind.*

**Juan Diego:** (*Sung*)

Why am I here?  
what happens now -  
will I see Her again -  
will I find Her somehow?  
what do I do -  
why did She come -  
will She come back again  
to this plundered land?  
why did She think  
I would understand Her?  
are the stars holding court -  
is the wind asking why?  
can She hear, does She care  
from Her throne in the sky?  
oh, great Mother of God -  
were You *real*?

*Juan kneels in prayer during the short mystical postlude. High pedal tone, as wind dies down. Sisters Paloma and Teresa enter hastily and are relieved to find Juan. Dialogue over underscore)*

**Sister Paloma:** Señor Diego!

**Juan Diego:** Sister -

**Sister Paloma:** We have just received word that your uncle is gravely ill. He begs you to come to him. He has not long to live.

**Sister Teresa:** You should leave now. It's a long distance.

*Juan is now doubly distressed. He bows, then exits running.*

**Sister Teresa:** (*Calling after him*) God be with you!

*They exit into the shadows, as light comes up again on the office, where Lord Bishop, now haunted by Juan's story, is*

*conspiring with Mother Superior. He has shared with her Juan's amazing account.*

**Mother Superior:** What? The Mother of God talked to *Juan Diego*?

**Lord Bishop:** So he says. I'm putting you in charge. He's going to Tepeyac again, presumably to tell this "Mother of the Universe" that I want proof of her identity. I want you to follow him at a distance, but close enough to see if a meeting takes place. *I have to know if She exists.* But don't let Juan Diego see you. And one more thing -

**Mother Superior:** Yes?

**Lord Bishop:** Disguise yourself as a man.

**Mother Superior:** A man?

*She does a double-take to the audience - as stage goes black.*

## Scene 4

**Time:** One hour later.

**Setting:** The Convent Refectory.

*The same four nuns are cleaning the refectory, sharing their latest gossip.*

**Sister Paloma:** Poor Juan Diego.

**Alisa:** Poor man.

**Paloma:** His uncle is mortally ill.

**Sister Teresa:** He's on his deathbed.

**Sister Delfina:** And who is Juan Diego?

**Sister Alisa:** He's an Aztec.

**Sister Paloma:** *(Irritated)* He's a convert to Christ. *(Sweetly)* Oh, do forgive me, Sister.

**Sister Alisa:** That's all right. Some of my best friends are Aztecs.

**Sister Paloma:** I overheard him talking to Lord Bishop earlier today - though you know I never eavesdrop.

**Alisa:** Ha!

**Sister Delfina:** Sure.

**Sister Teresa:** Right.

**Sister Alisa:** No more than I do.

**Sister Paloma:** I was scrubbing the tiles outside His Grace's door

and couldn't help but hear their conversation.

**Sister Alisa:** We believe you.

**Sister Paloma:** It seems that The Blessed Mother appeared to Juan Diego on Tepeyac Hill.

**Sister Alisa:** Why would the Virgin Mother be hanging around there?

**Sister Paloma:** He also told His Grace that She looked like an Aztec princess. And She was kind.

**Sister Teresa:** Like Juan Diego -

**Sisters Alisa & Teresa:** Is he married?

**Sister Paloma:** He's a widower in his fifties.

**Sister Alisa:** Sounds like a catch to me. Of course, he's a little old for us.

**Sister Teresa:** We're married to Jesus, remember?

*(They giggle)*

**Sister Alisa:** I keep forgetting.

*(Out from the shadows steps Mother Superior)*

**Mother Superior:** So I've noticed!

*(The Nuns are taken by surprise)*

**Mother Superior:** If I had my way I'd ship you back to Spain - all of you girls are incorrigible! Go to the Prayer Hall at once and pray for Mary's Intercession like you've never prayed before -

you girls are going to need it -

you girls are going to need it -

you girls are going to need it.

I have said before that when you act this way you are forsaking the Lord above - now go and pray for your sins, and hope that I do not decide to tell the Bishop what you've done -

you girls have been disgraceful -

now go and pray to Mary

and ask for Her forgiveness!

*The Nuns hurry out, frightened*

**Mother Superior:** I hope to God - I hope to God - oh, I pray, I pray that Juan Diego . . . that Juan Diego's vision be true.

*Lights fade.*

## Scene 5

**Time:** Early evening.

**Setting:** A remote village. We see a small alcove lit by candles.

A soft spotlight illumines an old man propped up in bed. He is Juan Bernardino, elderly UNCLE to Juan Diego. An old peasant woman who tends to his needs is giving him a sip of water. Juan enters.

**Juan Diego:** Uncle.

*The old man turns his head and faintly smiles.*

**Uncle:** Dear nephew. This will be our last hour together.

**Juan Diego:** *(Kneeling beside the bed)* No, Uncle. Listen to me. The people of this village love you. They love you. They are all praying for you. Oh, how they love you.

**Uncle:** Their prayers are the old Aztec prayers.

**Juan Diego:** God still hears the Aztec prayers. He hears the prayers of the whole universe.

**Uncle:** You walked many miles to come here. Now I ask you to walk one more mile to fetch me a priest - there is none here - a priest who will give me the Last Rites, a priest who will usher me into God's heavenly Kingdom. Find a priest, Juan - soon.

*Juan Diego kisses his uncle's hand - then sadly exits.*

*Fade to dark.*

## Scene 6

**Time:** The next morning.

**Setting:** We are back in the hill country of Tepeyak, where the land is hard-scrabble, barren. A cold wind is blowing.

*Juan Diego enters. Weary, dejected, unable to have found a*

*priest - he looks around in all directions for the Lady - then slumps down on a rock. He believes he has failed Her, his uncle and himself. He knows he will never see Her again. We hear an orchestral reprise of "Were You Real?" as Juan buries his face in his hands and begins to cry.*

**La Señora:** Juanito - my little son.

*Juan Diego hears Her voice with a mixture of surprise and anguish - he is ashamed for doubting Her existence. He hides his face from Her. We see Her standing, gazing at him with compassion - beautiful and shimmering. Her Angels are with Her*

**Juan Diego:** *(Bewildered)* Oh. You're here.

**La Señora:** I never left. You did not come yesterday.

**Juan Diego:** *(Sobbing)* I am sorry. My uncle was dying, so I went to him - he wanted a priest, and from night through the dawn I have walked the roads, searching - and now it is past hope.

**La Señora:** Never is it past hope, Juanito. It is better that you walked the roads to help one human heart, than to build a cathedral in God's name or My name or anyone's name. Last night I walked the roads with you. *(Pause)* Juanito, God has made your uncle well. He is healed - he is healed.

*Juan is dumbfounded.*

**Juan Diego:** Truly? My uncle is healed? I thank God for this.

**La Señora:** *(Briefly closing her eyes, then smiling)* At this moment he is gathering eggs from his hen.

*We see a shadowy figure creep onstage. It is Mother Superior disguised as an Aztec farmer. She tiptoes as closely as she can, to observe and to hear what is transpiring*

**Juan Diego:** *(Words tumbling out)* Oh, my Lady - oh, my Lady - the Lord Bishop told me he could not hear your request without some proof of who You are. I didn't know what to say - he called me a dreamer. I didn't know what to do - I was ashamed.

**La Señora:** A great Dreamer, yes!

**Juan Diego:** I thought it was over - that it was all a fantasy and that You were not - (*Pause*) - You were not . . .

*The Angels step forward defensively.*

**Angels:** What?

**Juan Diego:** She was not -

**Angel 1:** She was not *what*?

**Angel 2:** She was not *what*?

**Angel 3:** She was not *what*?

**Juan Diego:** REAL.

*The Angels are indignant.*

**All Three:** Not real? (*Crossing themselves*) Blasphemy - blasphemy - blasphemy!

**Juan Diego:** I felt abandoned.

**La Señora:** (*smiling*) Oh, Juanito, I was with you. And so were my Angels.

**Angels:** We would never abandon you.

**Angel 3:** All of the words that Our Lady says are true.

**Angels 1 & 2:** Everything that Our Lady says is true.

**Juan Diego:** Oh, My Lady, how I wonder why you chose me to help you. I am nothing but a leaf, just a tiny ladder to heaven.

**La Señora:** Those are wonderful things to be, Juanito. A tiny ladder to Heaven, think of it. You are both the Dreamer and the Dream. Soon you will all awake to a new day - to a great light in this land.

**Juan Diego:** Oh, dear Lady of Heaven - I pray so, I pray so, I pray so.

**All 3 Angels:** Alleluia!

*In her hiding place, Mother Superior drops her cane, making a noise. Juan turns and spots her, as she galumphs offstage.*

**Juan Diego:** That was Mother Superior. What was she doing here?

**Angel 1:** She was listening.

**Angel 2:** She was listening.

**Angel 3:** She was eavesdropping.

**Juan Diego:** (*Mystified*) On us?

**La Señora:** No, Juanito. On *you*. Mother Superior cannot hear me or see me.

**Juan Diego:** But why was she dressed like an Aztec farmer?

**La Señora:** She is about her heavenly business, Juanito, more than you can know - more than you can know. Before this day is over, she will be blessed, Lord Bishop will be blessed, you will be blessed - and all your people will be blessed. I will restore you as the Children of the Sun. This is My Holy Promise. All this will come to pass and you will be joyful more than you can know. Now I give you your last mission. It is a glorious one.

Juanito, you must look above  
to find the blessing of My love -  
so climb this rough and lonely hill  
and do not doubt God's Holy will  
or question how - or question why -  
beneath each rock and cactus thorn  
a miracle is being born  
under the winter sky -

a sea of Castilian roses  
blooming where flowers have never bloomed -  
gather the flowers and bring them to me -  
this will prove my identity  
and my power - and when Lord Bishop  
sees the roses - he will believe -  
he will believe that I am the Mother of God.

*The following two stanzas are sung simultaneously.*

**Juan Diego**

Now I will climb the hill

-

and find the flowers -

**La Señora**

You will find the flowers, Juanito

He will believe -

and when Lord Bishop sees      you'll bring the flowers to Me!  
the roses, he will believe      Go, Juanito.  
that you are the Mother  
of God -  
I'll bring the flowers to you.

*(As la Senora disappears, Juan sings a reprise of his final song in scene one:)*

**Juan Diego:**

This is the shining Hour, the radiant Day -  
I'm standing in the light of God at last -  
the ravens in this land will fly away -  
my little flame will burn away the past.  
The serpent god of sacrifice is dead -  
the taste of fear no longer fills my mouth -  
the rains of God are falling on my head  
and healing winds are blowing from the South.  
Take care, my heart, for I am just a man -  
A man who marvels at the wildest things on earth -  
where raging rivers flow, I will go -  
where kingdoms die, there I will find new birth.

*(We hear the off stage singing of the nuns)*

**Juan Diego:**

never again afraid -  
lost in the night -  
always the upward way -  
always the light.

*Juan Diego, looking upward, exits, as Angels reprise previous theme - La Señora standing in the center of the tableau.*

*Stage fades to dark.*

## Scene 7

**Time:** The same day, afternoon.

**Setting:** The office of Lord Bishop.

*Lord Bishop is at his desk - there is a knock at the door.*

**Lord Bishop:** Come in!

*The door is opened by Mother Superior, still dressed as an Aztec farmer and looking the worse for wear. She closes the door and, leaning on her cane, drags herself over to the desk. Lord Bishop looks up from his writing and scowls at this tired, dissheveled Aztec farmer in front of him.*

**Lord Bishop:** *(Barking)* You don't belong here! If it's work you want, go out back and find the groundsman. He needs a strong hand to shovel out the stables. *(Squinting at her)* You don't look like you've been converted. Do you want to be a Christian?

*Exhausted, Mother Superior drops into a chair and pulls off her Aztec hat.*

**Mother Superior:** *(Sullenly)* No.

**Lord Bishop:** *(Recognizing her)* Catarina! I didn't recognize you.

**Mother Superior:** It was a wild goose chase. And I was doing all the chasing. My feet are killing me.

**Lord Bishop:** Tell me what happened. Did you see - *Her?*

**Mother Superior:** No.

**Lord Bishop:** Did you hear Her voice?

**Mother Superior:** No. Juan Diego was alone. There he was, talking to the air, sobbing, weeping, kneeling - and no audience but me and the lizards.

**Lord Bishop:** What was he saying?

**Mother Superior:** Two things I heard - he was ashamed of failing Her - and maybe it was all a dream.

**Lord Bishop:** *(Ruefully)* I told him he was a dreamer.

**Mother Superior:** One more thing - he asked, "Why did you choose me to help you?" *(Thoughtfully)* Maybe the Holy Mother was there - but only he could hear or see Her. Remember, She didn't choose you - She didn't choose me. She chose a simple Aztec man with a childlike heart -

*Lord Bishop rises from his desk and gravely walks*

*downstage, looking up at the sky. Music drifts in.*

**Lord Bishop:** What if . . . ?

*The following two stanzas are sung simultaneously.*

**Mother Superior:** *(Sung)*

Something was happening there -  
something was stirring the air -  
rapture was flooding the sky  
and a river was running by -  
I could hear it running by -

**Lord Bishop:** *(Sung)*

Why am I haunted -  
caught in this net of longing?  
I want to see the mystery  
that others see -  
Something was happening-

but no river was there

in that desert place-  
longing-  
something was happening -

Something was happening there-  
Something was stirring the air-

I am caught in this net of

*Mother Superior exits. Lord Bishop is troubled, pensive -  
then there is a loud knock at the door.*

**Lord Bishop:** *(Impatiently)* Yes?

*The Conquistador Captain enters - Lord Bishop goes to  
greet him.*

**Captain:** Your Grace -

**Lord Bishop:** Captain - isn't it time to begin your trek to  
Veracruz?

**Captain:** Two more days. The next ship doesn't leave there for a  
month. When do *you* go?

**Lord Bishop:** *(Shrugging)* I don't know. You still have my  
dispatch for the King?

**Captain:** Yes. I will deliver it myself. By the way, packets of  
port mail just arrived - one has the royal seal -

*(Handing over a letter)*

- it's for *you*.

*Music conveys a feeling of suspension, as Lord Bishop  
opens the letter - almost fearfully - and reads it. Slowly,*

*he looks up at the Captain and smiles.*

**Lord Bishop:** Praise God.

**Captain:** What?

**Lord Bishop:** I don't have to go back.

**Captain:** I envy Your Grace.

**Lord Bishop:** My letter to the King - it's no longer necessary.

**Captain:** Of course - I'll return it within the hour.

**Lord Bishop:** Fair passage, Captain.

**Captain:** (*Bowing*) Thank you, Your Grace - but this New World suits me better.

*The Captain exits. Lord Bishop is alone. He reads again his letter from the King and awkwardly dances around the room. He is exultant. Then quietly, he folds it and puts it in a drawer. There is a knock at the door.*

**Lord Bishop:** (*Cheerfully*) Come in! Come in!

*Juan Diego enters, staggering beneath a heavy load tied around his neck. He loosens it.*

**Juan Diego:** Your Grace - I am back.

**Lord Bishop:** I knew you'd return. I have waited.

**Juan Diego:** (*Sung*)

From the wintry top of Tepeyac Hill,  
a place of scorpions, drought and desert thorns -  
I bring you the miracle of Faith.

**Lord Bishop:** Faith - the greatest miracle of all.

*In the middle of the room, Juan Diego throws open his tilma, and out cascade the most beautiful roses Lord Bishop has ever seen. Both men kneel, facing each other.*

**Juan Diego:** Alleluia.

**Lord Bishop:** (*Awed*) Roses of Castile.

*Over this carpet of flowers, they stare at each other as equals.*

**Lord Bishop:** Hail, Mary, full of grace - the Lord is -

*He suddenly stops, speechless - staring in wonder at Juan's open tilma lying beside the roses. Slowly he rises, transfixed by what he sees. He gathers up the tilma and holds it open for Juan to see. On the coarse fabric is the beautiful image of the Holy Mother. Filled with emotion, both men cry out.*

**Juan Diego:** Oh! Oh! It is my Lady! But how - ?

**Lord Bishop:** Oh, Mother in Heaven!

*At this point, Mother Superior rushes in, still adjusting her wimple. She has heard the commotion. The young Nuns follow her - they remain upstage, dazzled by the ravishing flowers. Mother Superior is the first to see the image on Juan's tilma. She kneels - and the Nuns also.*

**Lord Bishop:** Hail Mary, full of grace - the Lord is with thee - blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. Amen.

**All:** Amen.

*Lord Bishop stands with Juan - no longer worlds apart, but united in the mystery of what has transpired.*

**Lord Bishop:** Tomorrow Juan will take us to the place where the Queen of Heaven asks me to build a shrine in Her name. Praise God.

**Mother Superior & Nuns:** *(Sung)*

Ave Maria  
gratia plena  
Dominus tecum -

*During this prayer, La Senora & Angels enter, moving unseen past the Nuns, blessing everyone as they glide forward. La Señora sings a descant.*

**Mother Superior & Nuns:** *(cont'd)*

**La Señora:** *(Sung)*

Benedicta tu  
In mulieribus  
Et benedictus  
Fructus ventris tui Jesus  
Amen.

My children  
you are my children  
here in my arms  
never lost again  
alleluia  
forevermore  
forevermore  
Children of the Sun.

*Entire company slowly moves downstage, the image on the tilma being their focus, while elevated behind them is La Señora with Her Angels. The company - including Juan Diego - cannot see them.*

**Juan Diego:** *(Sung)*

Here is the place I was meant to be -  
You are my Shrine, my destiny.

**Lord Bishop:** *(Sung)*

Lady of light, in my deep despair -  
little I knew you'd hear my prayer.

*The Captain runs in, returning Lord Bishop's letter written to the King of Spain. Lord Bishop tears it up. The Captain suddenly sees the image of the Lady and bows before it, crossing his heart.*

**Mother Superior:** *(Sung)*

Ave Maria, I bless your name -  
that little candle so bright with flame  
I gave to Juan so long ago  
has turned the midnight sky aglow -

**La Senora:** *(Sung)*

Over the land, over the tides -  
over the arc of space and time -  
I am forever sending you  
blessings of hope and love sublime -  
mine is the still small voice within -  
I am the river you could not see -  
but still do I flow and still you know  
that you are never far from me -  
never will you be far from me.

**All:** *(Sung)*

Never can we be far from you -

Oh, Mother Maria, Ave!

**La Señora:** (*Sung*)

“The Children of this land are mine -  
and they shall be free,” thus saith the Lord -  
“received, redeemed - by love restored.”

**All:** (*Sung*)

The new dream born - the nightmare gone -  
Her vision grows - the flame burns on -  
the songbirds wheel above this land -  
roses will bloom at Her command -  
out of the Old World into the New -  
She will bring Heaven closer to you -  
your flight to glory has begun -  
you are invited guests of God -  
you are the Children of the Sun.

THE END