PRO-LIFE MEANING OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

By John-Henry Westen

MEXICO CITY, December 12, 2006 (LifeSiteNews.com) - One of the major achievements of Mel Gibson's (film) ***Apocolypto*** is to provide a historical corrective to the modern notion that the Aztecs were a civilized people before the Spanish Conquistadors defeated them. What Cortez and his men found was as Gibson portrays - a brutal ruling class, sacrificing to their gods villagers and forest dwellers by the hundreds and even thousands each year.

Academic William Tsamis writes that *"....in 1487, at the dedication of the great temple which stood in what is today Mexico City, a massive ritual sacrifice took place in which over 10,000 people perished on the temple's altars -- the killing was continual, four at a time, from sunrise to sunset* ."

The horrific practices of human sacrifice and the concentration on sacrifice of children, since they were considered 'pure', came to an end not only with the conquest of the Spaniards, but with the conversion of the native people of the Americas to Christianity. That happened to a large extent thanks to what Catholics and others believe was an apparition from heaven of Mary pregnant with the Christ Child - referred to as 'Our Lady of Guadalupe'.

The image of that apparition which is said to have been miraculously imprinted on the cloak of a native by the name of Juan Diego was laden with imagery and symbols which instructed and led some 9 million natives to convert to Christianity from their violent pagan religion.

Enter "***Guadalupe***" the Spanish-language film (with English subtitles) which premiered in the United States on the same day as *Apocolypto*.

Debuting in the US on 250 screens and grossing just over $300,000, the Santiago Parra film "*G*

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" bears little financial resemblance to the splash being made by Gibson's latest offering which opened in 2645 theatres and has grossed over $16.5 million in the same time period.

However, they are related in that *Guadalupe* is the natural continuation of *Apocalypto*. Historically, 'Our Lady of Guadalupe' is deemed a key instrument in bringing to an end the massive-scale human sacrifice.

For many in the pro-life movement, incidentally not only Catholics, Our Lady of Guadalupe, is seen as a symbol of hope for ending our modern-day human sacrifice of abortion which now far exceeds in number and kind the brutalities practiced by the Aztecs.

U.S. philosopher Peter Kreeft, in his book ***Three Approaches to Abortion***, makes the connection. He writes, "
About 500 years ago, a strikingly similar culture of death reigned in Aztec Mexico. Some historians estimate that one out of every three children . . . were ritually sacrificed to their bloodthirsty and demanding god . . . exactly the same proportion of children conceived in America who are aborted today
..."

William Tsamis continues the comparisons in his article, **The Abortion Holocaust**. He writes, "*I ronically, though, despite the rivers of blood that would flow from their sacrificial temples, the Aztecs regarded themselves as a gentle, environmentally conscious people, much like contemporary Western man*
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Tsamis continues that the Aztecs "*were actually very advanced in architecture, science, and technology, much like ourselves. So, in a sense, Western man is very much like Aztec culture, Yet while we retain values such as these, we also engage in the systematic mutilation and destruction of developing human life. We develop gross, barbaric procedures such as the D & X abortion procedure (Partial-Birth abortion) and we have no reservations regarding the wholesale slaughter of innocent human life.* "

The producers of the film '*Guadalupe*' have recognized this and have indicated that a portion of

the film's proceeds will go to support the pro-life/family movement.

The film '*Guadalupe*' is a modern-day adventure story which follows two scientists, Jose Maria and her sister Mercedes, who have dedicated their life to archaeology and history. The pair decide to investigate the legend of the Virgin of Guadalupe and their lives are changed by the discoveries they make.

As a young teen, the only child of a good family, who became pregnant out of wedlock the Virgin Mary would today be a perfect candidate for abortion. Indeed even in her day the life of the unborn Christ child was in danger as she could have been stoned to death for conceiving outside marriage.

Thus the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, of Mary with Child, is a fitting symbol for the pro-life movement. A symbol which has already led to the end of one era's horrific practice of mass human sacrifice, and which it is hoped will bring another era of peace to the Americas.