



# La Voz de Esperanza

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The Collective is sheltering at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic but will be returning when their health and safety can be assured. Extra funds are being raised to pay for folding La Voz each month during this time.

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- We advocate for a wide variety of social, economic & environmental justice issues.
- Opinions expressed in La Voz are not necessarily those of the Esperanza Center.

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Articles due by the 8th of each month

## Policy Statements

- \* We ask that articles be visionary, progressive, instructive & thoughtful. Submissions must be literate & critical; not sexist, racist, homophobic, violent, or oppressive & may be edited for length.
- \* All letters in response to Esperanza activities or articles in La Voz will be considered for publication. Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.



# When People Confuse Guadalupe for Mother Mary



by Alicia Enciso Litschi

Sitting in front of a fire in the coolness of a desert night, Our Lady of Guadalupe and Mother Mary settle into an all-night chat. There is so much to talk about—current events, past events, lovers, children, births, deaths, their travels and appearances, where they see it all going. They also love to chuckle about one of Guadalupe’s pet peeves: people’s tendency to mistake her for Mother Mary.

Guadalupe insists there’s no good excuse for the mix-up. She’s everywhere. Sure Mary’s got her statues, candles, medals, and occasional billboard. But Guadalupe, she looks back at you from murals, mosaics, shopping bags, produce displays at the grocery store, tortilla warmers, keychains, aprons, and bandanas. She’s on the sides of mountains and on the feathered headdresses of brown-skinned warriors who dance her prayers into the dirt with their blood, sweat, and feet. She even enjoys a good pun and hitches a ride on bumper stickers like “In Guad We Trust.” How could people not know who she is?

With a glint in her eyes, Guadalupe complains to Mary: “You’d think they’d get my name right, but it happens without fail. Someone comes along, sees me, points: ‘Oh look, there’s Mother Mary.’”

Guadalupe stomps her foot and waves a finger like any good Mexican mother.

“Mother Mary que la nada! Si aquí estoy practicamente con la penca en la frente! Do I look like I’m from Nazareth?”

Mary rolls her eyes. “Yes, you *do!* You’re as brown as the dirt on my feet.”

Guadalupe continues her case. “In fact, I think they should call me by my *real* names! My most treasured titles. Juicy titles. Tonantzin. Coatlicue. Tlazoteotl. Mother of All the Gods. Mother of the Near and Far. Why settle for the name the Spaniards pinned on me? Even that was a case of mistaken identity. Guadalupe was really la otra morena de Extremadura...” She trails off into her history lesson and Mary chuckles.

“Right, because the humans can’t wait to see the forms you take with those names. Rattlesnake-skirt with skull breastplate and talons for feet. It takes a while to even identify where your face is on that statue of yours. You’re too primordial. Older than dirt. They can’t take it!”

Egging her on, Mary adds: “No wonder some of them space out into wishful thinking and call you Mother Mary. My name is simple, not too many syllables, and only two colors—blue and white.”

Guadalupe throws up her arms dramatically, her eyes dancing. “Too primordial, tu Madre! Mírate al espejo! Estás mas vieja que la chingada.”

She points to Mary, who has cast off her cloak at some point during Guadalupe’s speech. She is now stark naked, reclining against one of the boulders, picking at her teeth with a twig. Her form is no longer easily recognizable as human. Cow horns protrude from her head and her torso is covered in breasts that may more accurately be the domes of a bumblebee nest. Her legs are furry, and a bright green serpent slithers around her belly.

Guadalupe throws off her cloak too. They fall into gales of laughter, the kind only very

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**VOZ VISION STATEMENT:** La Voz de Esperanza speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-visioned and milagro-bound. We are diverse survivors of materialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, violence, earth-damage, speciesism and cultural and political oppression. We are recapturing the powers of alliance, activism and healthy conflict in order to achieve interdependent economic/spiritual healing and fuerza. La Voz is a resource for peace, justice, and human rights, providing a forum for criticism, information, education, humor and other creative works. La Voz provokes bold actions in response to local and global problems, with the knowledge that the many risks we take for the earth, our body, and the dignity of all people will result in profound change for the seven generations to come.

Mexico Pueblo tradition as well as in the Arizona Yaqui tradition, the violin serves the same function.

Dancers join a matachin dance troupe for a number of reasons, such as to pay back a vow or a promesa, as thanksgiving for a favor granted, such as health, or even to have paid off a mortgage. The majority of dancers belong to families whose members have been dancing for decades; the tradition has passed from parent to child for generations. That is the case with the Ortiz family in Laredo, Texas whose Matachines de la Santa



Los Matachines de la Santa Cruz de la Ladrillera of Laredo, TX recently received a National Heritage Award from the National Endowment of the Arts.

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The group traces its origins to the 1800s to a mining area in Central Mexico, and then to Las Minas along the US-Mexico border, before establishing the tradition in Laredo in the early 20th century.

*BIO: Norma E. Cantú is Murchison Professor in the Humanities at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas. A prolific writer, activist and researcher of Mexican American folk life and literature, she is also on the Esperanza's Conjunto de Nepantleras.*

*Note: See back page for details on a livestream discussion on Dec. 12th of the Matachines-facilitated by Dr. Norma Cantú.*

## When People Confuse

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old women can get away with—knee-slapping howls and a few squirts of piss because why keep it in? They double over, tears streaming down their mysterious faces. They shake and dance. They howl and whistle. In the moonlight it becomes more evident just how old they are. The mountains tremble a little with all the commotion. Too much fun can set off earthquakes. The two give each other knowing looks and begin to quiet down.

In the chill of the night, they curl up with one another until it is impossible to know where one begins and the other ends. They watch the fire until it recedes into a faint glow. At dawn, the sky grows pink, and they disentangle themselves from each other. They dust off their cloaks and veils.

They set out on the path back to civilization, and Mary becomes wistful. “I do wish they’d give me more color and personality. At the very least restore me to my brown skin.”

Guadalupe squeezes her hand. “You know I’m not really offended that they call me by your name, right? I’m just glad they call me by whatever name they need me to be.”

They nod in unison.

“May they shelter in our cloaks.”

“May they feel the warmth of our arms as close as their very heartbeat.”

“May they allow us to hold them and carry them through the changes to come.”

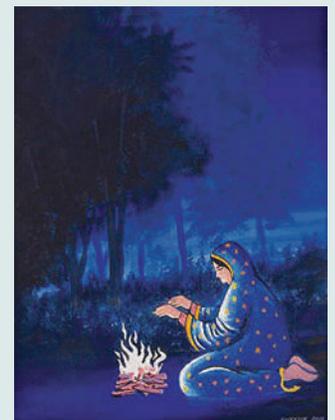
“We are here. What need could there be for fear?”

They reach the place on the path where their courses diverge. They slide into their cloaks and drape their veils over their heads, restoring their youthful appearances.

It’s just easier that way for now.

*BIO: Alicia Enciso Litschi, Ph.D. offers psychotherapy in Austin, TX. Alicia works from a mind-body-soul approach, providing an integrative and intuitive perspective on the healing process.*

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** *This issue of La Voz is dedicated to the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe whom we call on to bless our community in these trying times.*



Fire Side by James Roderick