



Our Lady of Guadalupe

December 12



On Saturday, December 9, 1531, Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Juan Diego on Tepeyac Hill. Juan Diego, who was a converted indigenous, heard a voice calling his name. He saw a beautiful lady who called herself “The Virgin Mary Mother of God.” Our Lady of Guadalupe as we now call her, asked Juan Diego to take a message to the Bishop of Mexico. She requested to build a temple in that place. As asked, Juan Diego took the message to Bishop Fray Juan de Zumarraga who did not believe in Juan Diego’s message. Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego again. He told Our Lady that the bishop didn’t believe him. Our Lady sent Juan Diego to see the bishop once again. This time, the bishop asked Juan Diego to ask Our Lady for a sign. Juan Diego went back to see Our Lady and again told her what the bishop asked. Our Lady asked Juan Diego to come back the next day but he couldn’t make it because his uncle was ill, near death. Instead, on December 12, he went to the city to get a priest for his uncle but he took a different route

to avoid seeing her. But surprisingly, Our Lady appeared to him on his way and asked where he was going. Juan Diego told her that his uncle was very ill and that he was on his way to get a priest. Our Lady told him not to worry, that his uncle was not going to die. Our Lady asked Juan Diego to go to the top of the hill where he was going to find roses. That was going to be the sign the bishop was asking for, as it was during wintertime. Donning the roses on the tilma (a typical indigenous cloak), he took them to the bishop. He unfurled his cloak, the roses fell to the ground and in the tilma was painted with what today is known as the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

At that time, despite intense work, the Christian missionaries had little success evangelizing the indigenous. Seven years after the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe, eight million natives converted to Catholicism. Our Lady of Guadalupe came to show us that the gift of faith is for everyone with no distinctions of race nor social status as she appeared to a humble indigenous. Her message was and is clear, she is the mother of God and our mother. She asks us to love Jesus, her Son, and to love each other as Jesus taught us. There is no scientific explanation of her image. It is a miracle.

The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe remains intact, even after attempts to destroy her. This reminds us that her love is intact and the love of God remains for us. She is a witness of the love of God which is eternal. Our Lady of Guadalupe is continuing to guide us to get closer to God, to her son, Jesus Christ and his word of love.

Let Us Pray

Our Lady of Guadalupe, we come to you knowing we need to grow in our ability to love one another. May we recognize your Son, Jesus, in each person we meet and may we have the courage to speak of our faith, just as did St. Juan Diego.

Reflection Questions:

- How does Our Lady of Guadalupe's example help you to be empathetic to those in the margins?
- How do you think that Our Lady of Guadalupe can use you as an instrument of Jesus' message in today's difficult realities?
- What example of Juan Diego makes him stand out as a disciple? How do you bring this example to your own life as a disciple of Christ?

O Virgin of Guadalupe, Mother of the Americas, grant to our homes the grace of loving and respecting life in its beginnings, with the same love with which you conceived in your womb the life of the son of God. Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Fair Love, protect our families so that they may always be united and bless the upbringing of our children.

Our hope, look upon us with pity, teach us to go continually to Jesus, and if we fall help us to rise again and return to him through the confession of our faults and our sins in the sacrament of penance, which gives peace to the soul.

We beg you to grant us a great love of all the holy sacraments, which are, as it were, the signs that your son left us on earth. Thus, Most Holy Mother, with the peace of God in our consciences, with our hearts free from evil and hatred, we will be able to bring to all others true joy and true peace, which come to us from your son, our lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

St. Pope John Paul II