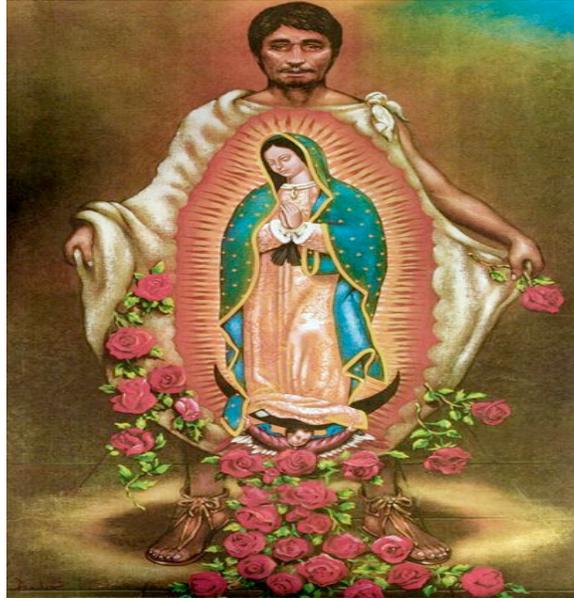


# ***Our Lady of Guadalupe***

***Day One – December 9, 2022***

***Feast Day of Juan Diego – 1<sup>st</sup> Catholic Indigenous to the Americas***



***“Call me and call my image Santa Maria de Guadalupe”***

On October 12, 1945, Pope Pius XII, decreed Our Lady of Guadalupe to be “Patroness of all Americas”. Her feast day is December 12<sup>th</sup>. Our Lady is also the patroness saint for unborn children and the New Evangelization.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is unlike any other apparition of the Blessed Virgin. First, it is the only apparition where Our Lady left a miraculous image of herself unmade by human hands. Second, it is the only universally venerated Madonna and Child image where Our Lady appears pregnant instead of holding the Infant Jesus.

The historical story surrounding this Marian apparition is truly fascinating. There are so many details regarding the time period and culture to which the image was revealed that combine to make this a truly significant apparition, not just for the Americas or for the Catholic Church, but for all of humanity.

## The Guadalupe Story

The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to a poor Aztec Indian named Cuauhtlatohuac who had been baptized and given the name Juan Diego, in the 16th century in present day Mexico City, Mexico.

On Saturday, December 9, 1531, which happened to be the feast day of the Immaculate Conception in that time, Juan Diego was on his way to a nearby barrio to attend Mass in honor of Our Lady. As he passed Tepeyac Hill he heard beautiful music like the warbling of birds. A radiant cloud appeared, and within it stood the Virgin Mary, an Indian maiden dressed like an Aztec princess. The Lady spoke to him in his own language and sent him to the bishop of Mexico, a Franciscan named Juan de Zumarraga. The bishop was to build a chapel to her in the place where the Our Lady appeared.

After the bishop's request to prove her identity, Mary asked Juan Diego to gather roses that were growing on the hill (which were neither native to the area nor in season) and take them to the bishop. Juan Diego obeyed and placed the roses in his tilma (or cloak) to carry back to the bishop as evidence of Our Lady's appearance.

Upon opening the tilma to reveal the miraculous roses to the bishop, there was something even more miraculous present in the tilma—a striking image of the Blessed Virgin Mary as she had appeared to him.

In the image Our Lady wears the traditional garments of an Aztec princess. A black sash around her waist was a cultural tradition among the Aztec women that indicated pregnancy. All the elements of the image point to Our Lady as being above the gods the Aztecs worshiped, while at the same time showing that she herself was submissive to the true Creator God while being pregnant with the Divine God-man that grew in her womb.

By using only cultural symbols and no words, which the Aztec people could read as a codex, the miraculous image on the tilma spoke the truth of the Christian faith that the Spanish Catholic missionaries proclaimed.

A mass conversion of millions upon millions of Aztecs to the Catholic faith soon followed—ending the human sacrifices, especially child sacrifices, that they practiced. Many Church historians also connect this mass conversion of souls to the Catholic faith as heaven's balance to the massive number of souls who left the Church during the Protestant revolt, a tragedy which was happening during the same period in Catholic Europe.

A church was built at Our Lady's request on the Hill of Tepeyac to mark the apparition site, and today it is the most visited Catholic pilgrimage shrine in the world. Venerated in this cathedral is the original tilma of St. Juan Diego, which still displays the miraculous

Our Lady of Guadalupe image. The image has been subjected to scientific testing to prove its authenticity and miraculous properties.