



Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Blessed Mother appeared to a fifty-five year old Mexican Indian, Juan Deigo on December 9, 1531.

Juan who had become a Catholic, was going to Mass early one morning when Our Lady stopped him as he was making his way down Tepyac Hill. Mary asked him to go to the Bishop and tell him that she wanted a great church built on the very spot where she was standing.

The Indian was very troubled. He wanted with all his heart to do what the Lady commanded. But how could he approach the Bishop? How could anyone believe such an unusual request?

Juan Diego went to the Bishop, who of course, did not believe his story. However, he did not want to offend Juan and told him to ask the Lady for a sign the next time he met her.

Juan was caught in the middle. The Lady knew what she wanted; the Bishop had the power to make her wish come true, but he wanted proof.

On December 12, early in the morning, Juan Diego was hurrying along the path. His uncle was dying and he was going to get the priest. Juan had no time to waste and did not want to meet the lady so he took another route.

But Mary appeared again to Juan and told him that his uncle was better. In fact, Juan found out a little later that Our Lady had for a moment appeared to his uncle and he was immediately cured.

The Lady asked Juan to go back to the Bishop. She wanted him to build a church. Juan remembered the Bishop's request and asked Mary for a sign. Mary sent Juan into the rocky area nearby and told him to gather the roses that were there.

Juan was confused. He knew there were no roses. It was winter, there was snow on the ground and the bushes were bare. But Juan did as he was told and there really were roses, beautiful roses. Excited, Juan picked them all and went to the Bishop.

He carried them carefully in his tilma (cloak). Juan clutched his cloak and made his way into the room where the Bishop was. Slowly he let down his cloak and the beautiful roses, fresh and wet with dew, fell to the floor. Juan smiled but was shocked when the Bishop and his attendants knelt down in front of him. He followed the Bishop's eyes that were staring at his cloak. And then he saw her, the picture of his beautiful lady, glowing on his tilma.

Her image was life-size, exactly as she had appeared. The Bishop had received his sign and Mary would have her church.

Today a great church, called a Basilica, stands on the spot where Our Lady of Guadalupe came to her people. Our Lady of Guadalupe was named patroness of Mexico and is also patroness of Latin America and the Philippines.

Millions of pilgrims visit the Basilica to see the Image every year.