

Our Lady of Guadalupe: Peacebuilder and Unifier

Who is Our Lady of Guadalupe?

In the year 1531, on three occasions during the month of December, Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego as Our Lady of Guadalupe. Appearing on the Tepeyac Hill in Mexico City as a beautiful young indigenous woman, Our Lady of Guadalupe spoke to Juan Diego in his native Nahuatl tongue asking him to deliver a message to Bishop Fray Juan de Zumárraga. Mary told Juan Diego that she wanted a church built on the spot where she appeared so that people would have a place where she could show them her Son and where they could experience her compassion and help. At first, the Bishop did not believe Juan Diego and demanded a sign. Juan Diego went back to Tepeyac Hill and implored the Virgin Mary to provide such a sign. Mary instructed him to gather the roses from the hillside, which is in itself surprising, since blooming roses are rare in December. Juan Diego filled his cloak, or “tilma,” with the roses, and returned with them to the Archbishop. Upon opening his tilma, the fresh roses fell to the ground, miraculously revealing an imprint of Our Lady’s image. A church was built on the site, and Juan Diego lived out his days nearby, helping others, praying, and doing penance.

Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared in Mexico at a pivotal time when the Spanish and indigenous groups, particularly the Aztecs, were in continual conflict. From her physical representation as a mestizo woman speaking Nahuatl, Our Lady of Guadalupe became an instrument of peace and unification. The image of Our Lady includes colors, patterns, and symbols that hold special significance for the indigenous community, conveying a message of compassion and love.



Now more than 500 years later, people continue to pray to Our Lady of Guadalupe for her intercession to protect and guide them. St. Juan Diego’s tilma is visited by numerous people every day at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. Mary, as the mother of God, also makes her mother to all God’s people. When she appeared to Juan Diego, she assured him: “Let your face and heart not be troubled, don’t be afraid ... Am I not here who am your mother? Are you not under my shadow and bosom?” Our Lady of Guadalupe has become an eminent image throughout Latin America and even North America and is often seen as an advocate for migrants and vulnerable populations across the Americas. The Catholic faithful often turn to her to ask for safekeeping as they embark on their long migration journey.

Pope Pius X declared her as the “Patron of all Latin America”, Pope Pius XII called her the “Empress of the Americas”.

When is the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe?

Pope John Paul II, in 1999, declared that the Church throughout America would celebrate **December 12th** as the [Feast Day](#) of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

What can you do on December 12th?

- **PRAY:** Attend Mass to Celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe. On her feast day, remember to pray for migrants, refugees and immigrants. See our list of existing Our Lady of Guadalupe Masses Throughout the Country.

- **REFLECT:** [Learn More](#) About Our Lady of Guadalupe and share her message of Christ's love for migrants and vulnerable people with your community.
- **ADVOCATE:** Taking from Our Lady of Guadalupe's message of unification and her special role to young people, voice your support for young people in our communities who are facing an uncertain future because of the recent end the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals ([DACA](#))

[program](#). DACA youth and the larger Dreamer community need legislative protection from Congress to ensure that they are not deported from the only home they have ever known and separated from their families. [Send a message](#) to your members of Congress urging passage of the DREAM Act quickly so as not to uproot the lives of so many young people who've made enormous contributions to our communities and our economy.

A Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

English

Most merciful mother, you came to tell us of your compassion through St. Juan Diego, whom you called the littlest and dearest of your sons. Give your strength and protection to all who live in poverty today, especially the young, elderly, and vulnerable. Plead for them to the Father, that they might experience the Divine Love tangibly in their daily lives, and that all who work for justice on behalf of the poor might grow in fortitude and humility. In these ways, manifest your charity and concern in our lives, that the weeping of humanity may be heard, and all our suffering, pain, and misfortune may be filled with divine comfort and healing. May we always know the peace of being in the cradle of your arms, and bring us safely home to your son, Jesus.

Amen.

Spanish

Madre misericordiosa, tú viniste a contarnos de tu compasión a través de San Juan Diego, a quien tu llamaste el más pequeño y el más querido de tus hijos. Dales tu fuerza y tu protección a todos aquellos que hoy viven en la pobreza, especialmente, a los jóvenes, a los ancianos y a los vulnerables Implora por ellos ante el Padre para que puedan sentir el Amor Divino en forma tangible en su vida diaria y que todo aquel que trabaja por la justicia a favor de los pobres pueda crecer en fortaleza y humildad. De estas maneras manifiesta tu caridad y tu preocupación en nuestra vida, que el llanto de la humanidad sea escuchado y que todos nuestros sufrimientos, dolores e infortunios sean colmados con la sanación y el consuelo divino. Que siempre conozcamos la paz de estar acunados en tus brazos y que nos lleves sanos y salvos a casa de Jesús, tu Hijo.

Amén

