



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

Our Family of Parishes: St. Boniface, Holy Family, St. Joseph, St. Leo and St. Therese Little Flower, has a new name – Our Lady of Guadalupe!

Our Lady of Guadalupe first introduced herself as the Mother of God and the mother of all humanity when she appeared on the hill of Tepeyac in Mexico in 1531. An indigenous peasant, Juan Diego, saw a glowing figure on the hill. After she had identified herself to him, Our Lady asked that Juan build her a shrine in that same spot, in order for her to show and share her love and compassion with all those who believe.

Afterwards, Juan Diego visited Juan de Zumárraga, who was Archbishop of what is now Mexico City. Zumárraga dismissed him in disbelief and asked that the future Saint provide proof of his story and proof of the Lady's identity.

Juan Diego returned to the hill and encountered Our Lady again. The Virgin told him to climb to the top of the hill and pick some flowers to present to the

Archbishop.

Although it was winter and nothing should have been in bloom, Juan Diego found an abundance of flowers of a type he had never seen before. The Virgin bundled the flowers into Juan's cloak, known as a tilma. When Juan Diego presented the tilma of exotic flowers to Zumárraga, the flowers fell out and he recognized them as Castilian roses, which are not found in Mexico.

What was even more significant, however, was that the tilma had been miraculously imprinted with a colorful image of the Virgin herself.

This actual tilma, preserved since that date and showing the familiar image of the Virgin Mary with her head bowed and hands together in prayer, represents the Virgin of Guadalupe. It remains perhaps the most sacred object in all of Mexico.

The story is best known from a manuscript written in the Aztec's native language Nahuatl by the scholar Antonio Valeriano. It was written sometime after 1556.

Over 20 million people visit the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe each year, now situated on the very same hill on which she appeared.

In 1990, Pope Saint John Paul II visited Mexico and beatified Juan Diego. 10 years later, in the year 2000, he was declared a Saint.

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Our Lady of Guadalupe - Under this title, Our Lady is the patron of Mexico, the United States, and all of the Americas, as well as the protector of unborn children. In 1531, she appeared in a vision to the peasant Juan Diego on Tepeyac Hill near Mexico City and charged him with asking the bishop to build a church on that spot. But the bishop demanded a sign, so Our Lady had Juan gather flowers in his cloak in December to take to the bishop. When Juan opened his cloak, the colorful image of Guadalupe was emblazoned on the cactus cloth. That icon is preserved in the most famous shrine in the Western Hemisphere, and Our Lady of Guadalupe continues to inspire poor and oppressed people worldwide.