

Our Lady Of Guadalupe

Guadalupe is a suburb of Mexico City, Mexico. It was the scene of the apparition of Our Lady, in December 1531, to a native Aztec peasant, fifty-one year old Juan Diego. Juan Diego and his wife had been recent converts to Catholicism. Mary appeared to Juan Diego on a hillside near the Aztec shrine of Tepeyac and told him that she wanted a Church built there. Juan Diego took this request to the Bishop of the diocese who asked for a sign that this was indeed Mary. Juan was directed by Our Lady to pick some roses (not in bloom then), and wrap them in his cloak and present them to the Bishop. When Juan unfolded the cloak, a painting of the Mother of God had miraculously appeared on it. Although the cloak's material is a coarse fabric made of cactus fiber and totally unsuitable for such a painting, the portrait has remained as brilliant as ever and is the principal object of veneration at Guadalupe.

The shrine Church, originally dedicated in 1709, is annually visited by millions of people, and many miracles are reported to have occurred there. A new basilica was consecrated at the site in 1976. The central message of Our Lady of Guadalupe, expressed in the first of her five apparitions, is preserved in an ancient document. Speaking to Juan Diego, Our Lady said: "You must know, and be very certain in your heart, my son, that I am truly the eternal Virgin, holy mother of the true God, through whose favor we live, the Creator, Lord of heaven and the Lord of the earth."

Pope Pius XII, in 1943, declared Our Lady of Guadalupe the Patroness of the Americas. Her feast day is December 12th.

