
Saint Juan Diego with Our Lady of Guadalupe

Feast Days December 9 and December 12



December 2013 Monthly Saint Reflection

St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick's Church

St Juan Diego

Feast Day, December 9

Born 1474 – Deceased 1548

The story begins in the early morning hours of December 9, 1531, when a 57-year-old Aztec Indian peasant named Juan Diego walked along the path of Tepeyac Hill on the outskirts of Mexico City.



Juan Diego grew up under Aztec oppression, and many of his family members were early converts to the faith. He was baptized "Juan Diego" in 1525 along with his wife, Maria Lucia, and his uncle Juan Bernardino.

That morning Juan Diego was headed to Mass, because at that time December 9 was the date for the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception throughout the Spanish Empire. As he walked along Tepeyac Hill, he began to hear beautiful strains of music, and saw a beautiful lady dressed in Aztec clothing, who called his name and she said she was the Immaculate Virgin Mary. She told Juan Diego it was her earnest wish that a temple be built at Tepeyac Hill to allow her to show her love for people. She said, "Ask for my help. Here I will listen to people's prayers and I will help them." She told Juan Diego to tell the Bishop of her desire.

The bishop did not believe Juan Diego, so he returned to the lady and suggested she send a better speaker. Mary instructed him to try again. So the next day, he did, and the bishop asked him to bring back a sign from Mary to prove his story. Again, Juan Diego returned to the Blessed Mother, who told him to return the next day to receive "the sign" for the bishop.

On December 11, Juan Diego spent the day caring for his sick Uncle Bernardino. He asked Juan Diego to find a priest to hear his confession and administer last rites. On December 12, Juan Diego set out again, but avoided Tepeyac Hill because he was ashamed that he had not returned the previous day as our Blessed Mother had requested. While making his detour, the Blessed

Mother stopped him and said, "Now listen to me. Do not let anything bother you, and do not be afraid of illness, pain or accident. Am I not here, your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? What more could you want?" Mary reassured Juan Diego that his uncle would not die; in fact, his health had been restored.

Mary sent Juan Diego to the top of the mountain to gather some flowers. He knew nothing grew on the top of the hill, let alone in winter. However, he did as the Lady said and found roses like those grown in Castille, but foreign to Mexico. He gathered them in his *tilma*, a garment like a poncho, and brought them to Mary who arranged them and told Juan Diego to take them to the bishop.

Juan Diego once again proceeded to the Bishop's house. After waiting a while for an audience, the bishop received him and asked what Juan Diego carried in his *tilma*. Imagine the bishop's surprise when he saw not only the roses, but also the beautiful image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The bishop wept at the sight of the Blessed Mother and cried out, "The Immaculate!" He asked for forgiveness for doubting Juan Diego. The bishop took the *tilma* and laid it at the altar in his chapel. By Christmas, an adobe structure was built atop Tepeyac Hill to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe. The chapel was dedicated on December 26, 1531.

Juan Diego remained poor, simple, humble, and devoted to the Eucharist. He spent the next 17 years traveling throughout central Mexico, bringing others to the faith and delivering Guadalupe's message that Mary loves us and wants to help us. Juan Diego was beautified in 1990 and canonized in 2002.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Feast Day, December 12

Just three days earlier, on December 9, the Church celebrated the feast of Saint Juan Diego.



On December 9, 1531, a 57-year-old Aztec Indian named Juan Diego saw the Blessed Mother on a hill in Mexico City. She told Juan to have a church built in her honor. When Juan went to ask Bishop Zumarranga about this, the bishop did not understand the Indian dialect – and he did not believe in the vision Juan Diego described.

Three days later, on December 12, Mary again appeared to Juan Diego, and this time she gave him a sign for the bishop. “Take these roses to the bishop,” she said, as she arranged in his cloak beautiful roses she had Juan Diego pick from the hillside although it was winter. When he was admitted into the

bishop’s room, Juan Diego opened his cloak, and out dropped the roses. On the cloak there remained an image of Mary as she had appeared to Juan Diego.

The image of Mary on the cloak is known as Our Lady of Guadalupe for an interesting reason. On that same day, Mary appeared to Juan’s uncle and cured him, giving him a message for the bishop, sang that she would, “crush the serpent’s head.” The bishop did not understand the Indians’ language.

The Indian word for “crush the serpent” sounded to him like “Guadalupe,” the name of Mary’s shrine in Spain. Thinking that the Virgin wanted the same name, the bishop called her Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Mary appeared to Juan Diego dressed as an Aztec woman to show her love and compassion to an oppressed group of people. Mary heard the prayers and pain of these people, and she came to give them hope.

Mary’s visit to Guadalupe is a reminder that God will remember His mercy for all of His people. In Mary’s song of joy, the Magnificat, she praised God because he has put down the mighty, exalted the lowly, filled the hungry, and sent the rich away empty. People honor Our Lady of Guadalupe because they recognize her motherly concern for them.

On December 7, we celebrated the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, patroness of the United States. On December 12 the church celebrates Mary as the patroness of the Americas.

St Margaret Mary and St Patrick

December 2013

Saint Juan Diego & Our Lady of Guadalupe

Week 1: Prepare

1. Set out the holy cloth and, if you'd like, collect other items such as a bible, cross or crucifix, candle, rosary, etc.
2. Read the stories of Saint Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe included in the packet.
3. Talk about Juan Diego and Mary and how they were connected. If Mary were to appear to you today, what would she appear as (remember how she appeared to Juan)?
4. Read the prayers of Saint Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe included in the packet.

Week 2: Take Action

1. Read the history of Our Lady of Guadalupe.
2. Help the poor in our area by contributing to The Catholic Charities Christmas Store, the food pantry, or Soup Kitchen.

Week 3: Discern

1. Gather in your home and set out the holy cloth and any other items you'd like to use.
2. Reread the story of Juan Diego.
3. Juan was given the sign of roses in winter. Look at the signs around you:
 - What do they tell you? Is God giving you signs?
 - What signs have been given or are around that grab your attention and show God's love?
4. Pray the prayer to Saint Juan Diego.

Week 4: Take Action

1. Gather in your home and set out the holy cloth and any other items you'd like to use.
2. Save the tissue paper from Christmas gifts, and with a pipe cleaner make roses. (Instructions are provided in this packet)
3. Color in the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe. (Provided in this packet)
4. Pray the prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

O Virgin of Guadalupe,
Mother of the Americas,
grant to our homes the grace of loving
and respecting life in its beginnings,
with the same love with which
you conceived in your womb
the life of the Son of God.

Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother of Fair Love,
protect our families so that
they may always be united
and bless the upbringing of our children.

Our hope, look upon us with pity,
teach us to go continually to Jesus,
and if we fall
help us to rise again and return to Him
through the confession of our faults
and our sins in the Sacrament of penance,
which gives peace to the soul.

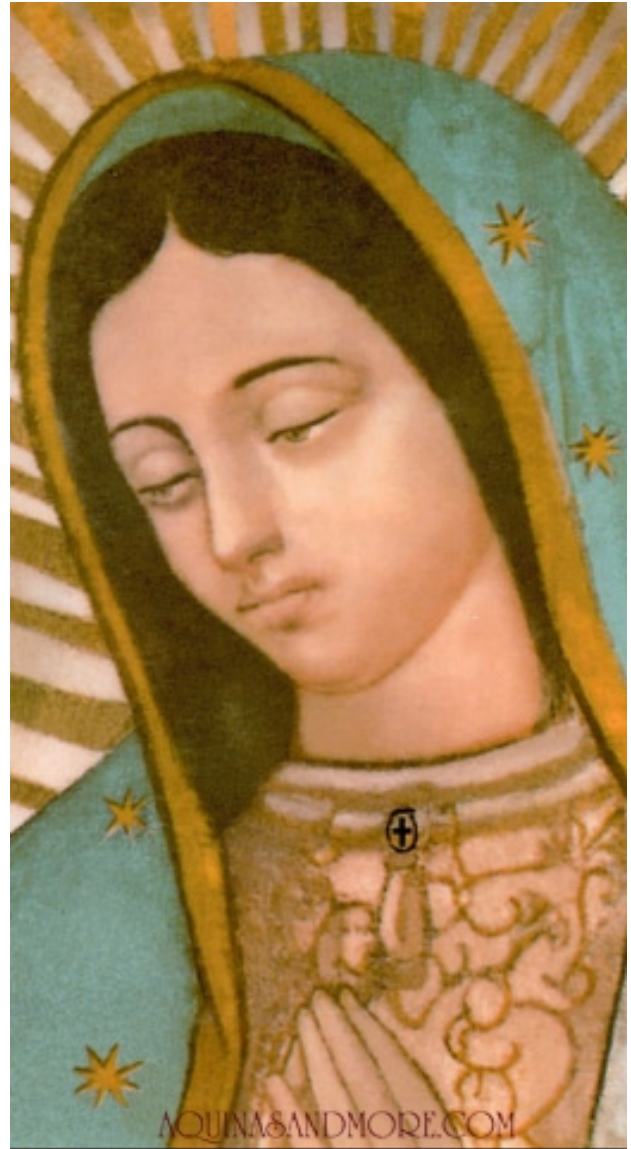
We beg you to grant us a great love
of all the holy Sacraments,
which are, as it were,
the signs that your Son left us on earth.

Thus, Most Holy Mother,
with the peace of God in our consciences,
with our hearts free from evil and hatred,
we will be able to bring to all others
true joy and peace,
which come to us from your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,

who with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

(Pope John Paul II.)



Prayer to Saint Juan Diego



Saint Juan Diego, you who were chosen by Our Lady of Guadalupe as an instrument to show your people and the world that the way of Christianity is one of love, compassion, understanding, values, sacrifices, repentance of our sins, appreciation and respect for God's creation, and most of all one of HUMILITY and obedience ...

You who we know is now in the Kingdom of the Lord and close to our Mother ...

Be our angel and protect us, stay with us as we struggle in this modern life not knowing most of the time where to set our priorities.

Help us to pray to our God to obtain the gifts of the Holy Spirit and use them for the good of humanity and the good of our Church, through the Heart of Our Lady of Guadalupe to the Heart of Jesus.

Amen.

Tissue Paper Flowers

These flowers are quick to make and the children enjoy making them. Younger children may need some help with accordion-pleating the tissue paper.



What you'll need

- Pastel colored tissue paper
- Chenille stem
- Scissors
- Ruler

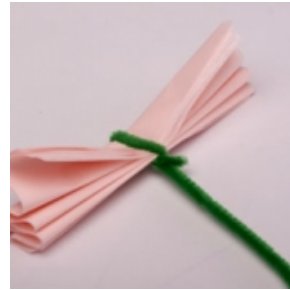
How to make the Flowers:



1.

Cut tissue paper into rectangles of desired size (5"x7" is the size pictured - see photo).

2. Stack around 15 pieces of tissue paper. Use the same color or different colors. If you want to use a smaller number of pieces of tissue paper, flower will not be as full.
3. Accordion pleat the tissue paper working from the long side.



4.

Wind one end of the chenille stem around the middle of the accordion pleated tissue paper.

5. Trim the ends of each side to give the pedals a unique look. Trimming the ends into a point (like a triangle), or a bump (like a half circle) will look very pretty.



6.

Gently separate each layer pulling upwards toward the middle of the flower.



7.

Do the second side.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

