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# The Bible Corner

Cindy Cottone



## The Miracle at Guadalupe

Juan Diego was a poor Indian farmer who lived in Mexico nearly 500 years ago. He was part of a great miracle that happened in the town of Guadalupe. There was nothing extraordinary about Juan Diego by the world's standards. He was a peasant with a simple life and very few possessions.

But Juan did have one very valuable gift that no one could ever take away from him. He had a strong faith in God. Juan had not always been a Christian. He had been converted by the missionaries who had come to Mexico.

Early in the morning of December 9, 1531, Juan set out for the weekly Mass in honor of Mary the Mother of God. It was a long walk, but he didn't mind. Dawn was just breaking on this peaceful morning.

Suddenly, he heard the most wonderful music coming from a secluded area on a hill. It reminded Juan of the type of music he heard in church. As he went closer to investigate, he saw a light so bright that he almost had to close his eyes. There were all of the beautiful colors of a rainbow in this light. Then, Juan saw her. There, on the hillside of Tepeyac, was a beautiful lady dressed in splendid robes like a princess. Juan was so surprised by this sight that he rubbed his eyes to make sure he was not dreaming. Then, the lady spoke to him.

"I am the Mother of God. I want you to give an important message to the bishop of Mexico. Go at once and tell him that you have seen me. I wish to have a church built here to show my love for the people of Mexico," she said.

Juan ran all the way to the bishop's house. He still couldn't believe what had happened. The bishop was a very busy man when Juan got there, and many other people were waiting to see him.

Juan Diego humbly waited his turn. At last it was time. When he finally told his story, some of the people in the room laughed. The bishop said, "I have many other things to take care of. Please return in a few days, and tell me the story again."

Juan was very sad. He had not expected this reaction. When he reached the hillside of Tepeyac, the beautiful lady was still there. "I have failed you," Juan stammered. "You should have chosen someone else. If you had sent a person of nobility, then the bishop would have listened."

"I chose you, Juan. Go back to the bishop tomorrow, and tell him about the church again," the lady said kindly. "I will try again dear lady," Juan promised.

Early the next morning, Juan made the long journey to see the bishop again. But the bishop said rather sternly, "I told you to wait a few days." Juan repeated his story again anyway, and this time the bishop asked him many questions. Juan felt relieved, and thought that he would surely be successful this time.

Finally, the bishop said, "Go back to the lady and ask her for a sign that she really is the Mother of God."

"I am sure the lady will provide a sign," Juan said.

After Juan had gone, the bishop went into his study to pray. He remained there for a long time, thinking about the strange story of Juan Diego.

Returning to the hillside, Juan knelt before the beautiful lady. He knew she would be kind to him and honor the request. "Come back tomorrow morning, and I will give you a sign to bring to

the bishop," she said gently.

The next day, a terrible thing happened. Juan's uncle was so sick, that he was dying. Juan forgot all about his promise to the lady and ran to get the priest for the last rites. As Juan passed the hillside, he saw the lady and began to cry. "I am sorry dear lady, but my uncle is dying. I had planned to return to you later."

"Don't worry my son. Your uncle will not die. Even now, he has already been cured. Now you must bring a sign to the bishop," she said.

The lady told Juan to go higher up on the hill and gather roses and place them in his tilma. The Indians wear tilmas, a type of cloak, tied around their necks and draped down the front. Tilmas are made of course material woven from cactus fibers. This material is not used for the clothing of the nobility.

Even though it was the middle of winter, Juan knew that he could trust whatever the lady had promised. At the top of the hill he soon saw the most beautiful roses all in bloom. He carefully picked them, and went back to see the lady. She arranged them in his tilma and told Juan to go at once to the bishop's house.

"This is the sign the bishop asked for. Do not show them to anyone else," she instructed.

Juan hurried to see the bishop. When he entered the study, there were several other people there. He opened his tilma and let the roses fall gently there on the carpet. Juan was surprised by what happened next. The bishop and everyone in the room had fallen to their knees and started to pray. But they were not looking at the roses on the carpet. All eyes were on his tilma.

When Juan looked down, he saw a magnificent sight indeed. There on the coarse fabric of his tilma was a picture of the lady exactly as she had appeared to him on the hillside.

In just a few days, the church was built on the site where the lady had first appeared to Juan Diego. The tilma with the painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe was hung in a place of honor so all could come to know of the great miracle.

Today, Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patron saint of Mexico. Millions of people come to this famous shrine every year. Even though it has been nearly 500 years since Juan saw the Lady, the colors on his tilma have never faded, and the material has not shown any sign of wear.

### For discussion:

- 1) Juan Diego was a poor farmer with a valuable possession. What was this possession? Can we also have this gift?
- 2) Why did Our Lady choose Juan Diego?
- 3) Two other miracles happened at Guadalupe besides the appearance of Our Lady and the picture. What were they?
- 4) Why did Juan Diego's tilma never fade or wear out?
- 5) Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus. She is known by many other names, including Our Lady of Guadalupe. The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is December 12. What other special day honoring Mary comes in December?

### For further reading:

"The Lady of Guadalupe," written and illustrated by Tomie de Paola. New York: Holiday House, 1980. Excellent rendition of this traditional story, with fine illustrations. Available at the public library.

prayer, call (607)272-5088, 533-7565 or 272-7595.

### New Church Group

In November, St. Ambrose Church gave birth to a new group of senior parishioners, called the St. Ambrose VIP's. New members are welcome.

The group will meet on the third Friday of each month, 10 a.m. to noon, in the rectory basement. All are welcome to the next meeting, Friday, Dec. 20.

For information, call the St. Ambrose Rectory, (716)288-5000.

### Fellowship Group

Iris Godfrey will be the featured guest at December's meeting of the Women's Aglow Fellowship, Ithaca Chapter. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the Women's Community Building, 100 W. Seneca Street. Admission is \$2.50. Call (607)273-8893 or 272-7595 for reservations.

The fellowship also meets on the first Monday of each month for prayer and praise at 8 p.m. in the Women's Community Building. All are welcome. For intercessory

# Wedding Guide

## 1985

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