

Kids' Chronicle

SPECIAL
EDITION

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BY CINDY BASSETT

The Lady on the hill

Many years ago, in a tiny village outside of Mexico City, there lived a poor, simple farmer named Juan Diego. Every Saturday, he walked several miles into the city for church services.

One Saturday, as Juan was walking to church, he heard a strange, wonderful sound coming from a nearby hill. When he was just a boy, his father had taught him all the names and songs of all of the birds. What he heard today was no ordinary bird song. It sounded more like a church choir's music. He went closer to the splendid melody.

"Juan Diego," someone called as he approached. The hill gleamed with all of the rainbow's colors.

It was a lady who had spoken his name. She looked like a princess dressed in an exquisite robe that was surrounded by light. "Who are you?" Juan asked timidly.

The lady answered so gently that Juan was no longer afraid. "I am the Mother of God and I want you to give the bishop a special message from me."

Juan was stunned. "Why me? I am just a poor Indian who has never even been to school. There are many important people you could send."

The Lady smiled. "I have chosen you, Juan Diego. Go now and see the bishop. Tell him I want a church built here so that I can show my love for all people, especially the Indians."

Juan gave his promise before he hurried off.

When he arrived, there was a long line of people already waiting to see the bishop. Even so, Juan stood in the courtyard until late afternoon for a chance to tell him about the Lady on the hill.

But when Juan finally told his story to the bishop, the other people in the courtyard laughed at him. "He's been out in the fields too long!" they mocked. "His brains must have gotten cooked in the sun!"

"Silence!" the bishop scolded. Then turning to Juan, he said, "I must have time to think over this strange request. Come back and see me in a few days."

Later that same day, as Juan returned to his village, he saw the Lady again. "I am sorry, but I have failed you," he sighed. "Perhaps if you had chosen someone else."

The Lady only smiled. "You are my choice. Go back and see the bishop again tomorrow."

When the bishop saw Juan again, he said, "I was not expecting you so soon. Ask this Lady on the hill to send a sign that she really is the Mother of God. Then I will do all that she has requested."

Juan thought the Lady might be angry when he told her. But she only said, "Come back here tomorrow morning, Juan Diego, and I will give you a sign."

It was still dark the next morning when Juan left his house. His uncle was dying and Juan promised to get the priest for the last rites. He nearly forgot all about the Lady until he heard her calling to him from the hill as he ran by.

"Why are you so worried, Juan?" "I must call the priest to bless my uncle. He's dying!" he replied anxiously.

"There is no need," the Lady assured him. "Your uncle has already recovered. Now go up on the hillside and gather enough roses to fill your tilma."

Juan Diego didn't hesitate even though he knew that roses didn't grow anywhere in December. As he climbed the hill, he found the most magnificent roses he had ever seen.

"Show no one the roses in your tilma except for the bishop," the Lady told Juan.



Illustrations by Kathy Walsh

Two of the bishop's servants caught a glimpse of Juan's treasure. "Where would he find such flowers in winter?" they wondered.

"Your excellency, here is the sign you asked for," Juan announced as soon as the bishop entered the room. Juan opened his tilma and released the splendid blossoms. The fragrant aroma filled the entire room.

"Hail, Mary, Mother of God," the bishop gasped as he and the two servants fell to their knees.

They weren't staring at the flowers on the floor, but at Juan Diego. For there on his tilma was a painting of the Lady on the hill just as he had described her.

That same day, everyone joined the procession to the cathedral in Mexico City, where the miraculous picture was placed over the altar. In a few days, a church and shrine were built on the very spot on the hill where Juan Diego had first seen the beautiful Lady who became known as the Lady of Guadalupe.

Mary's song of praise

Mary said "yes" when God asked her to be the Mother of his Son, Jesus Christ. Because of her "yes," Jesus became the Savior of the world.

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed.

For the Mighty One has done great things for me — holy is his name."

Luke 1:46-50.

Congratulations to Michael Goodman and Howard Jones. They will each receive a \$50 Savings Bond as co-winners of the November Kids' Club Contest. Both essay winners are in fifth grade at St. Theodore's School in Gates.

November essay question: Has God ever tested you? Did He provide a way out?

Michael Goodman

Yes! God has tested me. When I was 5 years old my Great Grandmother died. I loved her very much. When ever I wasn't in school, I was visiting her. One day when I came home from school, and I was all ready to go and visit her, my Mom told me that she had passed away. At first I thought she was kidding, but she wasn't. That's how God tested me, but He also provided a way out because my grandmother was suffering very much. Now I don't have to watch her suffer anymore. She is happy in heaven with God.

Howard Jones

God tested me because my mom is white and my father is black. Well, some kids make fun of me because I am black and white which is biracial. Sometimes they call me names. But I know God loves me, and the same with my Mom and Dad. God made every one of us different. So God really tested me to see if I were able to handle it. God knows and I know, that I can handle it. God gave me a way out by giving me two caring parents regardless of their color!

Send a special letter to God this Christmas!

Your letter can ask God a question, tell him something or be a prayer. You can also put your thoughts into an original drawing.

The December 24 issue of the Kids' Chronicle will be entirely devoted to your letters and artwork.

Your letter should be no more than 20 words and artwork should be drawn in dark colors. Include your name, age and school. Send letters and art to: Cindy Bassett, c/o Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Deadline for letters is Monday, Dec. 14.

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