

The early 1500s was a time of exploration for the Spaniards, Portuguese, and other Europeans. Spain colonized Mexico in 1521 which led to great tension and distrust between the Aztecs and Spaniards, making living in Mexico City very dangerous. The Christian Spanish were horrified by the human sacrifices the Aztecs made for their false gods. These sacrifices led to the killing of over 50,000 people a year. The different religions among them caused even more tension.

On December 9, 1531, Juan Diego, a poor and humble man of Aztec descent who had converted to Christianity was on his way to church when Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to him. She asked him to go to the Bishop and tell him a Basilica must be built. Juan followed his mother's orders and went to the Bishop. He told the Bishop of what he saw. The Bishop was intrigued and wanted to believe him but asked Juan for proof of this amazing miracle.

Even though Juan wanted to do what the Bishop asked him to do, he first had to take care of his very sick uncle. Juan grew extremely worried for his uncle and went to find a priest. On his way, Mary appeared to him again. With his heart full of worry and shame, Mary said to him, "Do not be distressed. Am I not here with you? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Your uncle's health is restored." With that, she told him to go to the top of the hill and collect the flowers. When he went to the top of the hill, Juan was amazed by the beautiful roses he found because there was frost on the ground. He collected the roses and brought them back to her where she arranged them neatly in his tilma. She told him to bring these to the Bishop and these would be his proof. Juan brought the flowers to the Bishop who was not only amazed by the fresh flowers but also by the beautiful image of Our Lady on Juan's tilma.

After this miracle, the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe was built. Still today, Juan Diego's tilma that would usually last about 15 years because it was made of cactus, is unfaded after 500 years. Our Lady's image is very symbolic to both the Spaniards and the Aztecs. She is dressed in royal clothing and her skin is a mix between dark and fair which symbolizes that she is the link that connects the two. The sun was at her back and the moon was at her feet. Showing that she was more powerful than the Aztecs false god of the sun and moon. She had a cross at her neck which was the same one the Spaniards had on their ships' sails. She had a black ribbon tied around her waist which meant she was with child. This child was Jesus. There were many flowers on her dress, but the most meaningful one was the four-petal flower at her abdomen where her child, Jesus, was. To the Aztecs, a four-petal flower meant the true God. Finally, on her cloak, were stars. These stars were in the exact position the stars were the day she appeared.

This miracle led the Aztecs to embrace Christianity and there were over 8 million conversions. This was the biggest conversion of all time. Juan Diego was Canonized in 2002. His feast day is December 9th because that is the day Our Lady appeared to him. Our Lady of Guadalupe's feast day is December 12th because that was the day she appeared to Juan the second time. She is now the patronus of the unborn. These miracles are so inspiring to Christians then and now and continue to amaze people about the goodness of God.