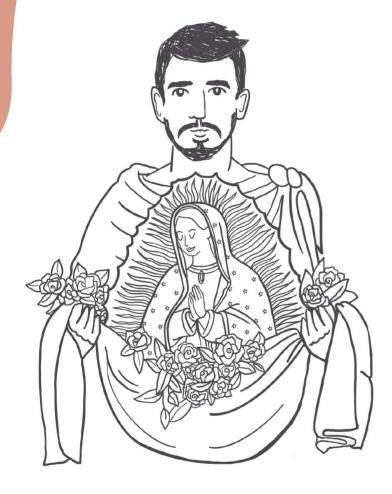
St. Juan Diego



Let not your heart be disturbed... Am I not here, who is your Mother?

OUR LADY TO JUAN DIEGO

St. Juan Diego is the first saint native to the Americas. He was born in Mexico and grew up in the Aztec religion. When he met a group of Franciscan missionaries, he decided to become a follower of Christ and was baptized along with his wife. Juan was very committed to his new life as a Christian.

One morning, on his way to Mass, Mary appeared to Juan dressed like an Aztec princess. She told him go to the city's bishop and ask him to build a chapel in the place where she appeared. When Juan told the bishop, he responded that he would need a sign in order to believe Juan. Several days later, Mary appeared to Juan again. This time, she instructed him to gather some roses. Even though it was winter, Juan found roses in bloom and filled his cloak with them. When he returned to the bishop, Juan opened his cloak, letting the flowers spill onto the ground. To his surprise, an image of the Virgin Mary was revealed imprinted upon his cloak.

News of this miracle spread quickly, and many of the native population converted to Catholicism as a result. This apparition of Mary, known as "Our Lady of Guadalupe," is a very popular devotion among Hispanic Catholics to this day. St. Pope John Paul II canonized Juan Diego in 2002, more than 470 years after the apparition.

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