

Juan for all, all for Juan.

In 1995 Monsignor Francis Weber (Archivist for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles), contacted Thomas Serafin to organize and catalog the collection of relics at the Archdiocese Archival Office. During this cataloging process, Tom became aware of the extremely rare piece of the Tilma of Juan Diego.

In 2002, Mr. Serafin developed the concept of a non-profit organization, the Apostolate for Holy Relics, which would utilize his collection, along with the talents and resources of many individuals, to increase appreciation of the spiritual, historical, and artistic value of relics, to promote the devotional veneration of relics, and to help preserve and safeguard relics for future generations.

In 2003 being aware of the Canonization of St. Juan Diego, Tom discussed with the Officers of the AHR his knowledge of the relic of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the custody of Monsignor Weber. All agreed that this would be a tremendous spiritual benefit to the faithful of America especially during the Year of the Rosary.

Tom set up a meeting with Monsignor to ask for his participation. Monsignor Weber suggested that the AHR create a proposal to be presented to Cardinal Mahony. Cardinal Mahony immediately and graciously agreed. Twenty-five American Bishops and over 150,000 curious and faithful alike have venerated this relic in twenty-one cities across the United States.

The “Tilma of Tepeyac Tour” of 2003 created nationwide atmosphere of renewed devotion and religious participation among the clergy and laity. I personally witnessed a renaissance within the Catholic Church brought on by the faithful in union with the communion of saints.

As I traveled across the country bringing the relic to the curious and faithful, I felt an equal amount of anticipation and anxiety. Transporting a relic of the Blessed Mother and St. Juan Diego was a tremendous privilege and responsibility. Traveling in the current times leads to canceled and postponed flights, weather threw its anger and uncertainty into the mix, and finally the unforeseen potential problems. I encountered them all, including the Eastern blackout that kept us of Detroit.

The relic is a ½” x ½” piece of the tilma of Our Lady of Guadalupe, surrounding the centered relic are four additional relics of Spanish origin; St. Francis Xavier, St. Teresa, St. Francis Borgia, and St. Ignatius of Loyola.

These are a few of the precious memories that I feel privileged to recount. The opening of the national tour was in Denver, Archbishop Charles Chaput, and Bishop Gomez presiding over the event.

The opening ceremony started with a two-mile procession led by Bishop Gomez. This was truly inspiring, this was actually my first relic procession, and it was amazing. The procession made me think of the triumphful entrance into Jerusalem by the faithful. People along the route ran from

their homes with religious items to join the group, construction workers turned off heavy machinery and came down from the scaffolding to line up on the sidewalk and remove their hardhats in veneration and respect. I am not sure they were very aware why they were doing it, but never the less they did do it!



Bishop Gomez of Denver leads procession.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE HISTORY

In 1531 a "Lady from Heaven" appeared to a poor Indian at Tepeyac, a hill northwest of Mexico City; she identified herself as the Mother of the True God, instructed him to have the bishop build a temple on the site and left an image of herself imprinted miraculously on his tilma, a poor quality cactus-cloth, which should have deteriorated in 20 years but shows no sign of decay 471 years later and still defies all scientific explanations of its origin. It apparently even reflects in her eyes what was in front of her in 1531!

Her message of love and compassion, and her universal promise of help and protection to all mankind, as well as the story of the apparitions, are described in the "Nican Mopohua", a 16th century document written in the native Nahuatl language.

There is reason to believe that at Tepeyac Mary came in her glorified body, and her actual physical hands rearranged the roses in Juan Diego's tilma, which makes this apparition very special.

An incredible list of miracles, cures, and interventions are attributed to Her. Yearly, an estimated 10 million visit her Basilica, making her Mexico City home the most popular Marian shrine in the world, and the most visited Catholic Church in the world next to the Vatican.

Altogether 24 popes have officially honored Our Lady of Guadalupe. His Holiness John Paul II visited her Sanctuary four times: on his first apostolic trip outside Rome as Pope in 1979, and again in 1990, 1999, and 2002.

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated on December 12. In 1999, Pope John Paul II, in his homily from the Solemn Mass at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, during his third visit to the sanctuary, declared the date of December 12 as a Liturgical Holy Day for the whole continent.

During the same visit, Pope John Paul II entrusted the cause of life to her loving protection, and placed under her motherly care the innocent lives of children, especially those who are in danger of not being born.

Our Lady of Guadalupe - Patroness of the Americas

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS RELATED TO THE MIRACLE

YEAR	EVENT
1474-	An Indian named Quauhtlatoatzin was born in Cuautitlan.
1476-	Juan de Zumarraga was born in Spain.
1492-	Christopher Columbus landed on an island in the Americas and named it San Salvador.
1514-	The first Marian Shrine in the New World was established in the city of Higüey, first to be built on American soil.
1519-	Hernan Cortez landed in Mexico.
1521-	The capital city of the Aztecs falls under Cortez.
1524-	The first 12 Franciscans arrive in Mexico City.
1525-	The Indian Quauhtlatoatzin is baptized by a Franciscan priest. He received the Christian name of Juan Diego.
1528-	Friar Juan de Zumarraga arrives in the New World.
1529-	Juan Diego's wife, Maria, became sick and died.
1531-	Year of the apparitions to Juan Diego
1533-	The first sanctuary was erected.
1541-	Franciscan priest and early historian of New Spain "Motolinia" writes that some nine million Aztecs had become Christians.
1548-	Death of Juan Diego.
1555-	In the Provincial Council, the second archbishop of Mexico, Alonso de Montúfar, formulated canons that indirectly approved the apparitions.
1556-	Archbishop Montúfar began the erection of the second church.
1560-	A document known as the Valeriano Relation is written by an Indian named Antonio Valeriano. Also known as the Nican Mopohua.
1564 -	An image was carried on the first formal expedition to the Philippine Islands.
1567-	The new church ordered by Archbishop Montufar is completed.
1570-	Archbishop Montufar sent to King Philip II of Spain an oil painted copy of the image of Guadalupe.
1571-	Admiral Doria carried a copy of the image aboard ship during the battle of Lepanto and imputed to the Virgin of Guadalupe the victory over the Ottoman Empire forces.
1573-	The historian Juan de Tovar, who transcribed the story from a still earlier source, probably Juan Gonzalez, Bishop's Zumarraga's translator, wrote the "Primitive Relation." (Discovered in the Mexican national Library Archives)
1647-	The image is covered with glass for the first time.

1648-The priest Miguel Sanchez published in Mexico City, in Spanish, a work entitled “Image of the Virgin Mary, Guadalupan Mother of God”.

1649-Luis Lasso de la Vega published the “Huey -Tlanahuicoltica”, telling the story in Nahuatl. It refers to earlier Nahuatl sources.

1666-A formal inquiry and investigation was conducted by the Church from February 18 to March 22 in order to give authority to the tradition.

1695-The first stone of the new sanctuary was laid. The sanctuary was solemnly dedicated in 1709.

1723-Another formal investigation ordered by Archbishop Lanziego y Eguilaz.

1737-The Most Holy Mary of Guadalupe was chosen as the patroness of the city of Mexico.

1746-The patronage of Our Lady of Guadalupe was accepted for all of New Spain, which then embraced the regions from northern California to El Salvador.

1746-The knight Boturini Benaducci promoted the solemn and official coronation of the image.

1754-Benedict XIV approved the patronage of New Spain and granted a Mass and Office proper to the celebration of the feast on December 12.

1756-Famous painter Miguel Cabrera publishes his extensive study of the Image in the book “American Marvel.”

1757-The Virgin of Guadalupe was declared patroness of the citizens of Ciudad Ponce in Puerto Rico.

1767-The religious of the Society of Jesus are expelled from the Spanish dominions, and the image is carried to various parts of the world.

1895-The coronation of the image, with pontifical authority and the attendance of a great part of the episcopate of the Americas.

1910-Pius X declared the Virgin of Guadalupe Patroness of Latin America.

1911-A church was built on the site of Juan Bernardino’s home.

1921-A bomb placed beneath the image exploded, causing great damage, but nothing happened to the tilma.

1924- A very important 16th century source documenting the miracle is found in Peru by anthropologist M. Saville. It is a pictorial calendar known as the Codex Saville and shows the image of our Lady located in the position representing the year 1531.

1928-A coronation of the image was made in Santa Fe, Argentina.

1929-First documented note of an apparent reflected image of a man’s head in the right eye of the Virgin, by photographer Alfonso Marcue.

1935-Pius XI extended the patronage of the Virgin of Guadalupe to the Philippines.

1941-The Archbishop of Mexico City, Luis Maria Martinez, gives a piece of the Tilma of Tepeyac to Archbishop John Cantwell of Los Angeles.

1945- Pius XII stated that the Virgin of Guadalupe was the “Queen of Mexico and Empress of the Americas” and brushes that were not of this world” had painted that she.

1946-Pope Pius XII declared her the Patroness of the Americas.

1951-Examination of the image by Carlos Salinas. Apparent reflection of a man's head in the right eye of the Virgin observed.

1956-Dr. Torroela-Bueno, an ophthalmologist, examined the eyes of the Virgin on the tilma.

1958-Dr. Rafael Torija-Lavoignet published his study of the Purkinje-Sanson effect as exhibited in the Guadalupan image.

1961- Pope John XXIII prayed to her as Mother of the Americas. He addressed her as Mother and Teacher of the Faith to the peoples of the Americas.

1962- Dr. Charles Wahlig, O.D. announces the discovery of two images apparently reflected in the eyes of the Virgin when studying a photograph enlarged twenty five times.

1966-Pope Paul VI sent a Golden Rose to the Basilica.

1975-Glass was removed so another ophthalmologist, Dr. Enrique Grave, could examine the image.

1976-Dedication of the new Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, located four miles from central Mexico City.

1979-Dr. Philip Callahan takes 40 frames of infrared photographs of the image. Later concluded that the original image is unexplainable as a human work.

†Pope John Paul II called her the "Star of Evangelization," knelt before her image, invoked her motherly assistance and called upon her as Mother of the Americas.

†Dr. Jose Aste-Tonsmann announces the finding of at least four human figures apparently reflected in both eyes of the Virgin. Dr. Tosmann used sophisticated image processing techniques with digitized photographs of both eyes.

1988-The liturgical celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12 was raised to the status of a feast in all dioceses in the United States.

1990-Juan Diego was declared Blessed by Pope John Paul II at the Vatican.

†Pope John Paul II returns to the Basilica in Mexico City to perform the beatification ceremony of Juan Diego.

1992-Pope John Paul II dedicated a chapel in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe in St. Peter's Basilica.

2003- Roger Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles authorized the loan of the "Tilma of Tepeyac" relic to the Apostolate for Holy Relics.

† The American Bishops invite the Apostolate for Holy Relics to tour the United States with the "Tilma of Tepeyac Tour."

December 8, 2003- The relic is enshrined in Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral in Los Angeles, Ca. for permanent public veneration.

Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

Feast Day: December 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe, who blessed Mexico and all the Americas by your appearance to Juan Diego, intercede for the holy Church, protect the pope, and help everyone who invokes you in their necessities.

O mystical rose, hear our prayers and our petitions, especially for the particular one we are praying for at this moment (mention your request).

Since you are the ever Virgin Mary and Mother of the true God, obtain for us from your most holy Son the grace of keeping our faith, sweet hope in the midst of the bitterness of life, burning charity, and the precious gift of final perseverance.

Amen.