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History of Our Lady of Guadalupe

All written narrations about the apparitions of the Lady of Guadalupe are inspired by the Nican Mopohua, or Huei Tlamahuitzoltica, written in Nahuatl, the Aztec language, by the Indian scholar Antonio Valeriano around the middle of the sixteenth century.

Unfortunately the original of his work has not been found. A copy was first published in Nahuatl by Luis Lasso de la Vega in 1649. Its cover is shown here.

Here follows an English translation:

Ten years after the seizure of the city of Mexico, war came to an end and there was peace amongst the people; in this manner faith started to bud, the understanding of the true God, for whom we live. At that time, in the year fifteen hundred and thirty one, in the early days of the month of December, it happened that there lived a poor Indian, named Juan Diego, said being a native of Cuautitlan. Of all things spiritually he belonged to Tlatilolco.

First Apparition

On a Saturday just before dawn, he was on his way to pursue divine worship and to engage in his own errands. As he reached the base of the hill known as Tepeyac, came the break of day, and he heard singing atop the hill, resembling singing of varied beautiful birds.

Occasionally the voices of the songsters would cease, and it appeared as if the mount responded. The song, very mellow and delightful, excelled that of the coyoltotl and the tzinizcan and of other pretty singing birds. Juan Diego stopped to look and said to himself: "By fortune, am I worthy of what I hear? Maybe I dream? Am I awakening? Where am I? Perhaps I am now in the

HVEI
TLAMAHVICOITICA
OMONEXITI IN ILHVIÇAS TLATOÇA
IHVAPILLI
SANTA MARIA
TOTLAÇONANTZIN
GVADALVPE IN NIÇAN HVEI ALTEPE-
NAHVAS MEXICO ITOÇAYOÇAN TEPEYACAC.



Impreso con licencia en MEXICO: en la Imprenta de Juan Bayle
Año de 1649.

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terrestrial paradise which our elders had told us about? Perhaps I am now in heaven?" He was looking toward the east, on top of the mound, from whence came the precious celestial chant; and then it suddenly ceased and there was silence. He then heard a voice from above the mount saying to him: "Juanito, Juan Dieguito." Then he ventured and went to where he was called. He was not frightened in the least; on the contrary, overjoyed.

Then he climbed the hill, to see from where he was being called. When he reached the summit, he saw a Lady, who was standing there and told him to come hither. Approaching her presence, he marveled greatly at her superhuman grandeur; her garments were shining like the sun; the cliff where she rested her feet, pierced with glitter, resembling an anklet of precious stones, and the earth sparkled like the rainbow. The mezquites, nopales, and other different weeds, which grow there, appeared like emeralds, their foliage like turquoise, and their branches and thorns glistened like gold. He bowed before her and heard her word, tender and courteous, like someone who charms and esteems you highly.

She said: "Juanito, the most humble of my sons, where are you going?" He replied: "My Lady and Child, I have to reach your church in Mexico, Tlatilolco, to pursue things divine, taught and given to us by our priests, delegates of Our Lord." She then spoke to him: "Know and understand well, you the most humble of my son, that I am the ever virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the True God for whom we live, of the Creator of all things, Lord of heaven and the earth. I wish that a temple be erected here quickly, so I may therein exhibit and give all my love, compassion, help, and protection, because I am your merciful mother, to you, and to all the inhabitants on this land and all the rest who love me, invoke and confide in me; listen there to their lamentations, and remedy all their miseries, afflictions and sorrows. And to accomplish what my clemency pretends, go to the palace of the bishop of Mexico, and you will say to him that I manifest my great desire, that here on this plain a temple be built to me; you will accurately relate all you have seen and admired, and what you have heard. Be assured that I will be most grateful and will reward you, because I will make you happy and worthy of recompense for the effort and fatigue in what you will obtain of what I have entrusted. Behold, you have heard my mandate, my humble son; go and put forth all your effort."

At this point he bowed before her and said: "My Lady, I am going to comply with your mandate; now I must part from you, I, your humble servant." Then he descended to go to comply with the errand, and went by the avenue which runs directly into Mexico City.

Second Apparition

Having entered the city, and without delay, he went straight to the bishop's palace, who was the recently arrived prelate named Father Juan de Zumarraga, a Franciscan religious. On arrival, he endeavored to see him; he pleaded with the servants to announce him; and after a long wait, he was called and advised that the bishop had ordered his admission. As he entered, he bowed, and on bended knees before him, he then delivered the message from the lady from heaven; he also told him all he had admired, seen, and heard. After having heard his chat and message, it appeared incredible; then he told him: "You will return, my son, and I will hear you at my pleasure. I will review it from the beginning and will give thought to the wishes and desires for which you have come." He left and he seemed sad, because his message had not been realized in any of its forms.



He returned on the same day. He came directly to the top of the hill, met the Lady from heaven, who was awaiting him, in the same spot where he saw her the first time. Seeing her, prostrated before her, he said: "Lady, the least of my daughters, my Child, I went where you sent me to comply with your command. With difficulty I entered the prelate's study. I saw him and exposed your message, just as you instructed me. He received me benevolently and listened attentively, but when he replied, it appeared that he did not believe me. He said: "You will return; I will hear you at my pleasure. I will review from the beginning the wish and desire which you have brought." I perfectly understood by the manner he replied that he believes it to be an invention of mine that you wish that a temple be built here to you, and that it is not your order; for which I exceedingly beg, Lady and my Child, that you entrust the delivery of your message to someone of importance, well known, respected, and esteemed, so that they may believe in him; because I am a nobody, I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf, and you, my Child, the least of my children, my Lady, you send me to a place where I never visit nor repose. Please excuse the great unpleasantness and let not fretfulness befall, my Lady and my All."

The Blessed Virgin answered: "Hark, my son the least, you must understand that I have many servants and messengers, to whom I must entrust the delivery of my message, and carry my wish, but it is of precise detail that you yourself solicit and assist and that through your mediation my wish be complied. I earnestly implore, my son the least, and with sternness I command that you again go tomorrow and see the bishop. You go in my name, and make known my wish in its entirety that he has to start the erection of a temple which I ask of him. And again tell him that I, in person, the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of God, sent you."

Juan Diego replied: "Lady, my Child, let me not cause you affliction. Gladly and willingly I will go to comply your mandate. Under no condition will I fail to do it, for not even the way is distressing. I will go to do your wish, but perhaps I will not be heard with liking, or if I am heard I might not be believed. Tomorrow afternoon, at sunset, I will come to bring you the result of your message with the prelate's reply. I now take leave, my Child, the least, my Child and Lady. Rest in the meantime." He then left to rest in his home.

Third Apparition



The next day, Sunday, before dawn, he left home on his way to Tlatilolco, to be instructed in things divine, and to be present for roll call, following which he had to see the prelate. Nearly at ten, and swiftly, after hearing Mass and being counted and the crowd had dispersed, he went. On the hour Juan Diego left for the palace of the bishop. Hardly had he arrived, he eagerly tried to see him. Again with much difficulty he was able to see him. He kneeled before his feet. He saddened and cried as he expounded the mandate of the Lady from heaven, which God grant he would believe his message, and the wish of the Immaculate, to erect her temple where she willed it to be. The bishop, to assure himself, asked many things, where he had seen her and how she looked; and he described everything perfectly to the bishop. Notwithstanding his precise explanation of her figure and all that he had seen and admired, which in itself reflected her as being the ever-virgin Holy Mother of the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ, nevertheless, he did not give credence and said that not only for his request he had to do what he had asked; that, in addition, a sign was very necessary, so that he could be believed that he was sent by the true Lady from heaven. Therefore, he was heard, said Juan Diego to the bishop: "My lord, hark! what must be the sign that you ask? For I will go to ask the Lady from heaven who sent me here." The bishop, seeing that he ratified everything without doubt and was not retracting anything, dismissed him. Immediately he ordered some persons of his household, in whom he could trust, to go and watch where he went and whom he saw and to whom he spoke. So it was done. Juan Diego went straight to the avenue. Those that followed him, as they crossed the ravine, near the bridge to Tepeyacac, lost sight of him. They searched everywhere, but he could not be seen. Thus they returned, not only because they were disgusted, but also because they were hindered in their intent, causing them anger. And that is what they informed the bishop, influencing him not to believe Juan Diego; they told him that he was being deceived; that Juan Diego was only forging what he was saying, or that he was simply dreaming what he said and asked. They finally schemed that if he ever returned, they would hold and punish him harshly, so that he would never lie or deceive again.

In the meantime, Juan Diego was with the Blessed Virgin, relating the answer he was bringing from his lordship, the bishop. The lady, having heard, told him: "Well and good, my little dear, you will return here tomorrow, so you may take to the bishop the sign he has requested. With this he will believe you, and in this regard he will not doubt you nor will he be suspicious of you; and know, my little dear, that I will reward your solicitude and effort and fatigue spent of my behalf. Lo! go now. I will await you here tomorrow."

Fourth Apparition

On the following day, Monday, when Juan Diego was to carry a sign so he could be believed, he failed to return, because, when he reached his home, his uncle, named Juan Bernardino, had become sick, and was gravely ill. First he summoned a doctor who aided him; but it was too late, he was gravely ill. By nightfall, his uncle requested that by break of day he go to Tlatilolco and summon a priest, to prepare him and hear his confession, because he was certain it was time for him to die, and that he would not arise or get well.

On Tuesday, before dawn, Juan Diego came from his home to Tlatilolco to summon a priest; and as he approached the road which joins the slope to Tepeyacac hilltop, toward the west, where he was accustomed to cross, said: "If I proceed forward, the Lady is bound to see me, and I may be detained, so I may take the sign to the prelate, as prearranged; that our first affliction must let us go hurriedly to call a priest, as my poor uncle certainly awaits him." Then he rounded the hill, going around, so he could not be seen by her who sees well everywhere. He saw her descend from the top of the hill and was looking toward where they previously met. She approached him at the side of the hill and said to him: "What's there, my son the least? Where are you going?" Was he grieved, or ashamed, or scared? He bowed before her. He saluted, saying: "My Child, the most tender of my daughters, Lady, God grant you are content. How are you this morning? Is your health good, Lady and my Child? I am going to cause you grief. Know, my Child, that a servant of yours is very sick, my uncle. He has contracted the plague, and is near death. I am hurrying to your house in Mexico to call one of your priests, beloved by our Lord, to hear his confession and absolve him, because, since we were born, we came to guard the work of our death. But if I go, I shall return here soon, so I may go to deliver your message. Lady and my Child, forgive me, be patient with me for the time being. I will not deceive you, the least of my daughters. Tomorrow I will come in all haste."

After hearing Juan Diego's chat, the Most Holy Virgin answered: "Hear me and understand well, my son the least, that nothing should frighten or grieve you. Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you not under my protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within my fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything. Do not be afflicted by the illness of your uncle, who will not die now of it. be assured that he is now cured." (And then his uncle was cured, as it was later learned.)

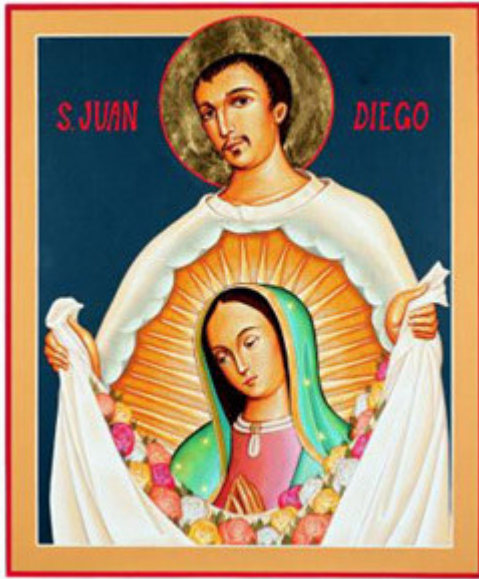
When Juan Diego heard these words from the Lady from heaven, he was greatly consoled. He was happy. He begged to be excused to be off to see the bishop, to take him the sign or proof, so that he might be believed. The Lady from heaven ordered to climb to the top of the hill, where they previously met. She told him: "Climb, my son the least, to the top of the hill; there where you saw me and I gave you orders, you will find different flowers. Cut them, gather them, assemble them, then come and bring them before my presence."



Immediately Juan Diego climbed the hill, and as he reached the summit, he was amazed that so many varieties of exquisite rosas de Castilla were blooming, long before the time when they are to bud, because, being out of season, they would freeze. They were very fragrant and covered with dewdrops of the night, which resembled precious pearls. Immediately he started cutting them. He gathered them all and placed them in his tilma. The hilltop was no place for any kind of flowers to grow, because it had many crags, thistles, thorns, nopales and mezquites. Occasionally weeds would grow, but it was then the month of December, in which all vegetation is destroyed by freezing. He immediately went down the hill and brought the different roses which he had cut to the Lady from heaven, who, as she saw them, took them with her hand and again placed them back in the tilma, saying: "My son the least, this diversity of roses is the proof and the sign which you will take to the bishop. You will tell him in my name that he will see in them my wish and that he will have to comply to it. You are my ambassador, most worthy of all confidence. Rigorously I command you that only before the presence of the bishop will you unfold your mantle and disclose what you are carrying. You will relate all and well; you will tell that I ordered you to climb to the hilltop, to go and cut flowers; and all that you saw and admired, so you can induce the prelate to give his support, with the aim that a temple be built and erected as I have asked."

After the Lady from heaven had given her advice, he was on his way by the avenue that goes directly to Mexico; being happy and assured of success, carrying with great care what he bore in his tilma, being careful; that nothing would slip from his hands, and enjoying the fragrance of the variety of the beautiful flowers.

The Miracle of the Image



When he reached the bishop's palace, there came to meet him the majordomo and other servants of the prelate. He begged them to tell the bishop that he wished to see him, but none were willing, pretending not to hear him, probably because it was too early, or because they already knew him as being of the molesting type, because he was pestering them; and, moreover, they had been advised by their co-workers that they had lost sight of him, when they had followed him.

He waited a long time. When they saw that he had been there a long time, standing, crestfallen, doing nothing, waiting to be called, and appearing like he had something

which he carried in his tilma, they came near him, to see what he had and to satisfy themselves. Juan Diego, seeing that he could not hide what he had, and on account of that he would be molested, pushed or mauled, uncovered his tilma a little, and there were the flowers; and upon seeing that they were all different rosas de Castilla, and out of season, they were thoroughly amazed, also because they were so fresh and in full bloom, so fragrant and so beautiful. They tried to seize and pull some out, but they were not successful the three times they dared to take them. They were not lucky because when then tried to get them, they were unable to see real flowers. Instead, they appeared painted or stamped or sewn on the cloth. Then they went to tell the bishop what they had seen and that the Indian who had come so many times wished to see him, and that he had reason enough so long anxiously eager to see him.

Upon hearing, the bishop realized that what he carried was the proof, to confirm and comply with what the Indian requested. Immediately he ordered his admission. As he entered, Juan Diego knelt before him, as he was accustomed to do, and again related what he had seen and admired, also the message. He said: "Sir, I did what you ordered, to go forth and tell my Ama, the Lady from heaven, Holy Mary, precious Mother of God, that you asked for a sign so that you might believe me that you should build a temple where she asked it to be erected; also, I told her that I had given you my word that I would bring some sign and proof, which you requested, of her wish. She condescended to your request and graciously granted your request, some sign and proof to complement her wish. Early today she again sent me to see you; I asked for the sign so you might believe me, as she had said that she would give it, and she complied. She sent me to the top of the hill, where I was accustomed to see her, and to cut a variety of rosas de Castilla. After I had cut them, I brought them, she took them with her hand and placed them in my cloth, so that I bring them to you and deliver them to you in person. Even though I knew that the hilltop was no place where flowers

would grow, because there are many crags, thistles, thorns, nopales and mezquites, I still had my doubts. As I approached the top of the hill, I saw that I was in paradise, where there was a great variety of exquisite rosas de Castilla, in brilliant dew, which I immediately cut. She had told me that I should bring them to you, and so I do it, so that you may see in them the sign which you asked of me and comply with her wish; also, to make clear the veracity of my word and my message. Behold. Receive them.”

He unfolded his white cloth, where he had the flowers; and when they scattered on the floor, all the different varieties of rosas de Castilla, suddenly there appeared the drawing of the precious Image of the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of God, in the manner as she is today kept in the temple at Tepeyacac, which is named Guadalupe.

When the bishop saw the image, he and all who were present fell to their knees. She was greatly admired. They arose to see her; they shuddered and, with sorrow, they demonstrated that they contemplated her with their hearts and minds. The bishop, with sorrowful tears, prayed and begged forgiveness for not having attended her wish and request. When he rose to his feet, he untied from Juan Diego’s neck the cloth on which appeared the Image of the Lady from heaven. Then he took it to be placed in his chapel. Juan Diego remained one more day in the bishop’s house, at his request.

The following day he told him: Well! show us where the Lady from heaven wished her temple be erected.” Immediately, he invited all those present to go.

Apparition to Juan Bernardino

As Juan Diego pointed out the spot where the lady from heaven wanted her temple built, he begged to be excused. He wished to go home to see his uncle Juan Bernardino, who was gravely ill when he left him to go to Tlatilolco to summon a priest, to hear his confession and absolve him. The Lady from heaven had told him that he had been cured. But they did not let him go alone, and accompanied him to his home.

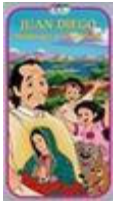
As they arrived, they saw that his uncle was very happy and nothing ailed him. He was greatly amazed to see his nephew so accompanied and honored, asking the reason of such honors conferred upon him. His nephew answered that when he went to summon a priest to hear his confession and to absolve him, the Lady from heaven appeared to him at Tepeyacac, telling him not to be afflicted, that his uncle was well, for which he was greatly consoled, and she sent him to Mexico, to see the bishop, to build her a house in Tepeyacac.



Then the uncle manifested that it was true that on that occasion he became well and that he had seen her in the same manner as she had appeared to his nephew, knowing through her that she had sent him to Mexico to see the bishop. Also, the Lady told him that when he would go to see the bishop, to reveal to him what he had seen and to explain the miraculous manner in which she had cured him, and that she would properly be named, and known as the blessed Image, the ever-virgin Holy Mary of Guadalupe.

Juan Bernardino was brought before the presence of the bishop to inform and testify before him. Both he and his nephew were the guests of the bishop in his home for some days, until the temple dedicated to the Queen of Tepeyacac was erected where Juan Diego had seen her.

The bishop transferred the sacred Image of the lovely lady from heaven to the main church, taking her from his private chapel where it was, so that the people would see and admire her blessed Image. The entire city was aroused; they came to see and admire the devout Image, and to pray. They marveled at the fact that she appeared as did her divine miracle, because no living person of this world had painted her precious Image.

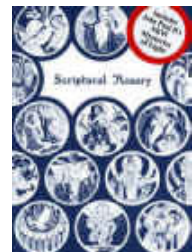


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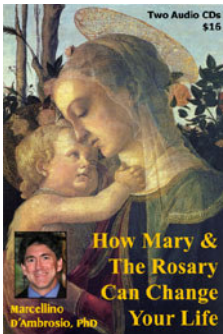
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