

Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe

- ANTON JOSHY » 12 YRS » USA

MILLIONS OF PILGRIMS from around the world come to see the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

This church was inspired by Mother Mary, and is a symbol of our faith.

It all started on a cold winter's day. St. Juan Diego was an Aztec, who converted and became a devout Catholic. On December 9th, 1531, Juan Diego was going to Mass as usual. As he walked past Tepeyac Hill, he saw a vision of Our Lady. Our Lady asked Juan Diego to visit the local bishop and tell him to build a shrine for her. He hurried to convey the news but the bishop didn't believe him and asked for proof that Mary appeared to him.

A helpless Juan Diego went back home to take care of his sick uncle. On December 12th, as he went looking for a priest who would give the last sacrament to his uncle, Our Lady appeared to him again. He told her of the bishop's answer, and she reassured him and healed his uncle. She told him that he would find roses on the hill, even

though it was winter which would be the proof the bishop wanted. Juan Diego found the roses and gathered them in his *tilma* (cloak). When he opened his cloak, the roses fell out and the bishop saw an image of Our Lady imprinted inside the cloak. The bishop believed Juan Diego, and very soon, a shrine to Our Lady was built.

The original *tilma* with Our Lady's image is enshrined in the altar of the basilica. After centuries of remodelling, and extensive damage to the church, a new basilica was built, which is what we see today.



SOME FACTS

- ✦ It is the most visited Marian site in the world.
- ✦ The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is 12th of December.
- ✦ The new Basilica has a circular floorplan so that the image of the Virgin can be seen from any point within the building.
- ✦ The exterior represents the Virgin's mantle that 'covers' those who come to visit her.
- ✦ In 1921, a factory worker planted a bomb a few feet away from the *tilma*. The explosion demolished the marble steps of the main altar, the windows of nearby homes and it bent a brass crucifix, but the *tilma* suffered no damage.

