

HVEI
TLAMAHVIÇOLTICA
OMONEXITI IN ILHVICAC TLATÓCA
ÇIHVAPILLI

SANTA MARIA
TOTLAÇONANTZIN
GVADALVPE IN NICAN HVEI ALTEPE-
NAHVAC MEXICO ITOCAYÖCAN TEPEYACAC.



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Año de 1649.

Nican Mopohau: The Story of Juan Diego

All written narrations about the apparitions of the Lady of Guadalupe are inspired by the Nican Mopohua, written in Nahuatl, the Aztec language, by the Indian scholar Antonio Valeriano around the middle of the sixteenth century. A copy was first published by Luis Lasso de la Vega in 1649.



Here follows a paraphrase of Valeriano's work,

Ten years after the seizure of the city of Mexico, war came to an end and there was peace among the people. Faith, the understanding of the true God, started to blossom. It was December of the year 1531 that a poor Indian named Juan Diego had a remarkable encounter.

FIRST APPARITION

On a Saturday just before dawn, he was on his way to Divine Worship. When he reached the base of the hill called Tepeyac, he heard singing coming from the hill, like singing of beautiful birds only even more beautiful. Juan Diego stopped and said to himself: "Am I worthy of what I hear? Am I dreaming, or am I waking up? Where am I? Could it be that I have reached the terrestrial paradise which our elders told us about? Am I in heaven?" As he was looking toward the east, toward the top of the hill, the singing suddenly ceased, and all became silent. He then heard a voice calling to him: "My little Juan, my little Juan Diego." He went toward the voice, not in fear but in great joy.

When he reached the top, he saw a Lady, who told him to approach. As he drew near, he was amazed at her heavenly beauty. Her clothing shone like the sun, and the place where she stood sparkled like a rainbow. The plants around her seemed to glisten like gold. Juan Diego bowed before her, and she spoke gently and courteously to him.

"Juanito, littlest of my sons, where are you going?"

He answered, "My Lady, I am going to your church to pursue the things of God."

She said to him:

"Know, littlest of my sons, that I am the ever virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the True God by whom we live, of the Creator of all things, Lord of heaven and earth. I desire that a temple be built here soon, so that I may show all my love, my compassion, my help, and my protection, because I am your merciful mother; yours and all the inhabitants in this land, of all who love me. There I will hear their sorrows and remedy all their afflictions. Go then to the bishop of Mexico and tell him all you have seen and heard. I will be grateful and will reward you with happiness. See, you have heard my command, my littlest son; go and put forth all your effort."

Juan Diego bowed before her and said: "My Lady, I will obey your command. I must go now, your humble servant." He went back down the hill and took the road to Mexico City.

SECOND APPARITION

Juan Diego entered the city and went straight to the bishop's palace. He pleaded with the servants to announce him, and after a long wait, he was called in to see the bishop, a Franciscan named Juan de Zumarraga, who had recently arrived in Mexico City. He entered and bowed, and then delivered the message from the heavenly Lady, along with everything he had seen, and heard. The bishop was polite to him and told him that he would hear him again another time. But Juan Diego was sad, since it appeared that the bishop did not plan to act on the message.

Juan Diego returned to the hill of Tepeyac on the same day. He went to top of the hill and found the heavenly Lady waiting for him at the same spot where he had first seen her. He bowed before her and said:

"Lady, I did what you commanded. With difficulty I entered the bishop's study. I gave him your message, just as you instructed me. He received me kindly and listened attentively, but it seemed as though he did not believe me. I understood by the manner of his answer that he thinks that this matter of a temple to be built in your honor is an invention of mine. I beg you, Lady, to entrust your message to someone of importance and well known, someone they might believe. I am no one, nothing, and I know nothing of the bishop's palace. Please do not be angry with me, my Lady."

The Blessed Virgin answered:

"Least of my sons, you must understand that I have many servants and messengers, but it is of great importance that you be the one to take this message. Go back again tomorrow and see the bishop. You go in my name; tell him that the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of God, sent you."

Juan Diego replied:

"Lady, I will gladly obey, and will not fail, though I may not be believed. I will come back tomorrow afternoon at sunset and bring you the bishop's answer."

With that he departed for home.

THIRD APPARITION

The next day, Sunday, Juan Diego left home before dawn to go to Divine Worship, following which he was to see the bishop. After hearing Mass, he arrived at the bishop's palace, and once again, with much difficulty, he was admitted. He knelt before the bishop and told him again of the command of the heavenly Lady, that a temple be built on the hill to her honor. The bishop asked about the Lady, where he had seen her, and how she looked. Nonetheless, he did not comply with the command. He said he needed a sign to be sure that this was truly the Blessed Virgin.

Juan Diego answered, "What sign do you seek? I will go to the heavenly Lady and ask it from her." The bishop dismissed him, and he sent some trusted members of his household to follow Juan Diego and see what he would do and to whom he would speak. But they lost sight of him, and they returned greatly annoyed at not having been able to follow him. They told the bishop that Juan Diego was either lying or dreaming. They further planned to take him and punish him if he were ever to return, in order to cure him of his lying.

Meanwhile Juan Diego returned to the Blessed Virgin and told her the answer the bishop gave him. The heavenly Lady responded:

"Very well, my dear little one, return here tomorrow, so that you may take to the bishop the sign he asked for. Then he will believe you and will no longer be suspicious of you. And I will reward you for your efforts on my behalf. Go! I will be waiting for you here tomorrow."

FOURTH APPARITION

On the following day, Monday, Juan Diego did not return to the hill, because his uncle, Juan Bernardino, had become gravely ill. Juan Diego sent for the doctor, but it seemed too late. That night his uncle requested of him that he go the next morning to summon a priest, to prepare him for death and hear his confession, because he was certain that his time had come.

On Tuesday, before dawn, Juan Diego left his home on this errand. When he came to the road that went toward the hill of Tepeyac, he said to himself: "If I go this way, the Lady is bound to see me and detain me for the sign I must take to the bishop." So, he went the other way around the hill. Nonetheless, the heavenly Lady came to him as he skirted the hill and said to

him: "Where are you going, my littlest son?" He bowed before her, not knowing if he was more grieved or frightened. He said to her:

"My Lady, God grant that you are happy. How are you this morning? Is your health good, Lady? A servant of yours, my uncle, has contracted the plague, and is near death. I am hurrying to your house in Mexico to call one of your priests to hear his confession and absolve him, because, since we were born, we came to guard the work of our death. But I will return here soon, so I may go to deliver your message. My Lady, forgive me, be patient with me. Tomorrow I will come quickly."

The Most Holy Virgin answered:

"My littlest son, let nothing frighten or grieve you. Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any sickness or suffering. Am I not here, I who am your Mother? Are you not in my shadow, under my protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within my fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve or be disturbed by anything. Do not be afflicted by the illness of your uncle, who will not die of it. Be assured that he is now cured."

And so, it was that at that moment his uncle was cured, as was later discovered.

When Juan Diego heard these words, he was greatly comforted. In his happiness he begged to be allowed to go see the bishop with the sign that would allow his words to be believed. The heavenly Lady said to him: "Climb, my least son, to the top of the hill where you first saw me. There you will find flowers. Cut them and gather them together and bring them to me."

Juan Diego climbed the hill and was amazed to find there many varieties of exquisite Castilla roses, fragrant and in full bloom, though it was winter. At one he began cutting them, and he gathered them and placed them in his tilma. The hilltop was no place for flowers; it had many thistles, thorns, and cactus plants. Not even weeds would grow there in the cold month of December. Juan Diego went back down the hill with the roses he had cut and brought them to the heavenly Lady. She took them and placed them back in the tilma, and said:

"My littlest son, these roses are the sign you are to take to the bishop. Tell him in my name to comply with my wishes. But only in the presence of the bishop shall you unfold your mantle and show what it is you are carrying. Tell him all that you have seen and done on my orders and tell him once again to erect a temple as I have asked."

Juan Diego, happy and confident, went his way directly to Mexico City, taking great care that nothing would slip from his tilma, and enjoying the fragrance of the beautiful roses.

THE MIRACLE OF THE IMAGE

When Juan Diego reached the bishop's palace, he begged to be taken to the bishop. But the servants pretended not to hear him, thinking him to be a bother, and influenced by what they had been told by those who followed him earlier. When they saw that he was standing a long time, crestfallen, doing nothing, waiting to be called, and that he seemed to be carrying something in his tilma, they approached him to see what it was. Juan Diego saw that he could not hide what he was carrying, and so to avoid violence against him, he uncovered the edge of his tilma. There were the fresh Castilian roses, fragrant, beautiful, and in full bloom. The men were amazed and tried to seize the flowers and pull them out of the tilma. Three times they tried, but they were not successful, and the flowers seemed to become nothing more than a painted image. Then they went to tell the bishop that the Indian who had come so many times before wished to see him again, and that he had something to show him.

When the bishop heard this, he realized that Juan Diego was bringing the sign he had requested. He immediately ordered his admission. Juan Diego knelt before him as he was accustomed to do, and again told him all that he had seen:

“Sir, I did what you ordered. I went to the heavenly Lady, Holy Mary, the precious Mother of God, and told her that you asked for a sign, that you might believe her wish. She has graciously granted your request. Early today she sent me to the top of the hill where I was accustomed to see her and told me to cut the Castilian roses I found there. After I had cut them, I brought them to her, and she took them with her hand and placed them in my cloth, that I might deliver them to you in person. I knew that the hilltop was no place for flowers. But as I approached the top of the hill, I saw that I was in Paradise, surrounded by exquisite flowers. I was told to bring them to you so that you may see in them the sign you requested and believe my message. Behold. Receive them.”

Juan Diego unfolded the cloth that was holding the flowers, and as all the different varieties of Castilian roses scattered to the floor, there suddenly appeared the precious Image of the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of God, just as she is today kept in the temple at Tepeyac, which is named Guadalupe. When the bishop saw the image, he and all who were present fell to their knees. 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 the cloth with the Image of the Lady from heaven from Juan Diego's neck. 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 the bishop said to him, "Come! Show us where the Lady from heaven wished her temple be erected." And he invited all those present to go along.

APPARITION TO JUAN BERNARDINO

Juan Diego brought the bishop to the spot where the heavenly Lady wanted her temple built, but he then begged to be excused. He wanted to see his uncle Juan Bernardino, who was still gravely ill when he had left him that morning. But they did not let him go alone: they all accompanied him to his home.

Upon their arrival, they found Juan Bernardino happy and healthy. He was greatly amazed to see his nephew so accompanied and honored, and he asked the reason. His nephew then told him of the vision at Tepeyac, that the heavenly Lady had told him that his uncle would be healed, and that he should go to the bishop with the message that he was to build a house for her. Then Juan Diego's uncle revealed that he also had seen the heavenly Lady just as she had appeared to his nephew, and that she had cured him. The Lady told him to relate to the bishop his miraculous cure, and to say that she was to be named the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe.

Juan Diego and his uncle Juan Bernardino were guests of the bishop for many days, until the temple dedicated to the Queen of Tepeyac was erected upon the spot where Juan Diego had seen her. The bishop transferred the sacred Image of the heavenly Lady to the main church, so that all could see and venerate her blessed Image. The entire city was very moved; they came to see and to venerate the Image, and to pray. They marveled at this divine miracle, because no person of this world had pained her precious Image.



