

# Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe/the Virgin of Guadalupe (Spanish: *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe/La Virgen de Guadalupe*) is a Catholic title of the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, and the patron saint of Mexico. This title is frequently used in a Mexican Catholic context, referring to historical apparitions of the Virgin Mary in 1531. Our Lady of Guadalupe is integral to Mexican Catholicism and is seen by many as a fundamental component of Mexican identity. The Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe is commemorated yearly on **December 12<sup>th</sup>**.

## Background

In December 1531 on Tepeyac Hill in modern-day Mexico City, the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared five times to Juan Diego, a member of the Chichimeca people who had converted to Christianity. Speaking to him in Nahuatl, Diego's native language, the Virgin Mary requested that Diego build a chapel in her honor so she could intercede in the prayers of those who appealed to her in need. These apparitions coincided with several miracles, including the healing of Diego's uncle and the appearance of roses blooming in winter. Diego wrapped the roses in his cloak (Spanish: *tilma*) to bring to the Archbishop of Mexico City as proof of the Virgin's appearance. When Diego opened his tilma, the flowers fell to the ground, leaving an image of the Virgin imprinted on Diego's cloak. This image became known as Our Lady of Guadalupe. It continues to hold religious and cultural significance for many Mexicans and people of Latino descent across the globe and has become a symbol of Mexican independence and social equality.

## Common Practices and Celebrations

Each year, millions visit the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the apparition sites in northern Mexico City. On December 12, special masses celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe are held at the Basilica in Mexico City and other Mexican Catholic and Latino churches where altars are decorated with roses in honor of the Virgin. The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated across Mexico and the US with processions that include dancing and singing of the traditional birthday song "La Mañanitas."

## How Will Our Lady of Guadalupe Affect the Global Workplace?

According to federal workplace law in Mexico, the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe is not an official holiday requiring businesses to close. However, some individuals may request time off around this Feast Day for personal observances. Companies with locations and colleagues in Mexico should be aware that many workplaces in Mexico recognize the day with masses and feasts for their employees. There also may be processions in the days leading up to the December 12<sup>th</sup> Feast Day, with businesses, restaurants, and other entities taking part. Various states and cities within Mexico have differing traditions and observances to commemorate the Feast Day.

## Greetings

To recognize the holiday with your colleagues and friends, it is appropriate to greet them with a simple "Happy Our Lady of Guadalupe Day" or "Feliz día de la Virgen de Guadalupe."

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