

Our Lady of Guadalupe from Catholic Online, Saints & Angels

An elder Mexican man makes his way to Mass in the early morning twilight of December 9, 1531. He is a peasant, a simple farmer and laborer, and he has no education. Born under Aztec rule, he is a convert to Catholicism, and each step he takes this morning is a step into history.

The morning quiet is broken by a strange music that he will later describe as the beautiful sound of birds. Diverting his path to investigate the sound, Juan Diego comes face to face with a radiant apparition of the Virgin Mary.

Juan Diego is 57 years old. He has just encountered the Virgin Mary on Tepeyac Hill, the site of a former Aztec Temple. His wife has died two years earlier, and he lives with his elder uncle, scratching his living from the earth as a humble peasant farmer. Why should this unlearned, man be chosen by Our Lady to carry a message to the Bishop? Perhaps because she would find none other as humble as Juan Diego.

Juan Diego is dazzled by the incredible beauty and miraculous nature of Our Lady's appearance. She appears as a native princess to him, and her words sound more beautiful than the sweetest music ever made.

Our Lady calms the startled traveler, and assures him of who she is. She instructs Juan Diego to visit his bishop and ask that a temple be built on the site of her appearance, so that she will have a place to hear petitions and to heal the suffering of the Mexican people. "Now go and put forth your best effort," Our Lady instructs.

Visibly shaken, Juan Diego approaches the Bishop who is initially very skeptical of his account. What did this peasant truly want? Does he merely seek attention? Notoriety? Money? Or is he possessed by demons? Has Juan Diego been tricked by the Devil?

The Bishop patiently listens to Juan Diego's accounts and dismisses him. The humble farmer has failed.

Juan Diego begins to doubt himself. He returns to Tepeyac Hill where he hopes for some conformation of what he's experienced. Indeed, Our Lady does not disappoint, for she appears again, as radiant as before. Juan Diego tells Our Lady what she already knows, that the Bishop did not believe him. She instructs him to return the next morning and ask again.

The Bishop is beside himself. Why did this peasant insist on telling this story? How could he know if the peasant was lying or perhaps insane? At their second meeting, the Bishop asks for a sign. Juan Diego makes a promise he won't keep, saying he will return the very next morning with a sign from Our Lady.

But that evening, Juan Diego returns home to find his uncle, Juan Bernadino, who is 68 years old, and suddenly, terribly ill. The illness is known to the people there and it brings a burning fever so hot, it's almost always fatal. Juan Diego cannot leave his uncle's bedside to keep his pledge to the Bishop. He spends two days with his uncle, trying to save him. When it becomes apparent his uncle is about to die, he leaves to find a priest who can prepare him for death.

Frightened and saddened, Juan Diego sets off in a great hurry, time is running out, and Juan Diego is afraid his uncle will die without a last confession. On the road, in his way, Our Lady appears for a third time. Upset and afraid, Juan explains himself. Our Lady replies, "Am I not your mother? ... Are you not in the crossing of my arms?" she asks.

Shamed by the admonishment, but emboldened by Our Lady's presence, Juan Diego asks for the sign he promised to the Bishop. He knows he is wrong to doubt Our Lady. Juan Diego is instructed to climb to the top of Tepeyac Hill where he will find flowers. He is to pick the flowers there, which are unlike any he has seen before, and he is to keep them hidden in his tilma until he reaches the Bishop.

Juan Diego is skeptical again. It's December, what flowers could grow on the summit of the hill in this cold?

Nevertheless, he obeys and atop the hill he finds a great number of flowering roses which he picks and hastily gathers into his cloak.

For the third time, Juan Diego is ushered in to see the Bishop. The skeptical cleric has waited for two days to see what sign Our Lady has for him. Juan opens his tilma, letting the roses cascade to the floor. But more than the roses, both men are astonished to see what is painted on his humble tilma - an exquisite image of Our Lady.

In the image, she stands as she appeared, a native princess with high cheekbones. Her head is bowed and her hands are folded in prayer to God. On her blue cloak, the stars are arranged as they appeared in the morning darkness at the hour of her first apparition.

Under her feet, is a great crescent moon, a symbol of the old Aztec religion. The message is clear, she is more powerful than the Aztec gods, yet she herself is not God.

At the same time Our Lady is appearing to Juan Diego, and directing him to cut the flowers on Tepeyac Hill, she also appears to his uncle, Juan Bernadino who believes he is about to die. As soon as she appears, the fever stops and Juan Bernadino feels well again. She tells Juan Bernadino, she wants to be known as "Santa Maria, de Guadalupe."

Our Lady of Guadalupe did not appear again, for her mission was complete. The temple was built and remains there today, in what is now a suburb of Mexico City. Juan Diego's tilma, woven from cactus fibers, with a shelf-life of just 30 years at best, remains miraculously preserved.

The symbolism of Our Lady's dress is obvious to over eight million Native Mexicans, whom all speak different languages. She is brighter than the sun, more powerful than any Aztec god, yet she is not a god herself, and she prays to one greater than her. Her gown is adorned with stars in the correct position as in the night sky, and the gold fringe of her cloak mirrors the surrounding countryside. Millions of natives will convert at the news of what has happened. Millions more will make pilgrimages over the next five centuries to see the miraculous tilma, and to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe. Great miracles continue to occur, even today.

On October 12, 1945, Pope Pius XII, decreed Our Lady of Guadalupe to be "Patroness of all the Americas." Her feast day is December 12, and it is a Holy Day of Obligation in Mexico.

Our Lady of Guadalupe had this to say to Juan Diego:

"Know for certain, least of my sons, that I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary, Mother of the True God through whom everything lives, the Lord of all things near and far, the Master of heaven and earth. It is my earnest wish that a temple be built here to my honor. Here I will demonstrate, I will exhibit, I will give all my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to the people. I am your merciful mother, the merciful mother of all of you who live united in this land, and of all mankind, of all those who love me, of those who cry to me, of those who seek me, of those who have confidence in me. Here I will hear their weeping, their sorrow, and will remedy and alleviate all their multiple sufferings, necessities and misfortunes."

Additional Content Provided by [Wikipedia](#)



Detail of the face, showing the discoloration on the top part of the head, where a crown is said to have been present at some point, now obscured by an enlarged frame for unknown reasons

Our Lady of Guadalupe (Spanish: *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*), also known as the **Virgin of Guadalupe** (Spanish: *Virgen de Guadalupe*), is a Catholic title of Mary, mother of Jesus associated with a series of four Marian apparitions to a Mexican peasant named Juan Diego and one to his uncle, Juan Bernardino, which are believed to have occurred in December 1531, when the Mexican territories were part of the Spanish Empire.

A venerated image on a cloak (*tilmahitli*) associated with the apparition is enshrined in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. Pope Leo XIII granted the image a decree of canonical coronation on February 8, 1887, and it was pontifically crowned on October 12, 1895. The basilica is the most-visited Catholic shrine in the world, and the world's third most-visited sacred site.^{[2][3]}

Description of Marian apparitions

According to the *Nican Mopohua*, included in the 17th-century *Huei tlamahuitzoltica*, written in Nahuatl, the Virgin Mary appeared four times to Juan Diego, a Chichimec peasant, and once to his uncle, Juan Bernardino. The first apparition occurred on the morning of Saturday, December 9, 1531 (Julian calendar, which is December 19 on the (proleptic) Gregorian calendar in present use). Juan Diego experienced a vision of a young woman at a place called the Hill of Tepeyac, which later became part of Villa de Guadalupe, in a suburb of Mexico City.^[4]

According to the accounts, the woman, speaking to Juan Diego in Nahuatl, his first language and the language of the former Aztec Empire, identified herself as the Mary, "mother of the very true deity".^[5] She was said to have asked for a church to be erected at that site in her honor.^[4]

Based on her words, Juan Diego then sought the Archbishop of Mexico City, Juan de Zumárraga, to tell him what had happened. Not unexpectedly, the Archbishop did not believe Diego. Later the same day, Juan Diego saw the young woman again (the second apparition), and she asked him to continue insisting.^[4]

The next day, Sunday, December 10, 1531, in the Julian calendar, Juan Diego spoke to the Archbishop a second time. The latter instructed him to return to Tepeyac and to ask the woman for a truly acceptable, miraculous sign to prove her identity. Later that day, the third apparition appeared when Juan Diego returned to Tepeyac; encountering the same woman, he reported to her the Archbishop's request for a sign, which she consented to provide on the next day (December 11).^[6]

On Monday, December 11, however, Juan Diego's uncle fell ill and he was obliged to attend to him. In the early hours of Tuesday, December 12, as Juan Bernardino's condition deteriorated, Juan Diego journeyed to Tlatelolco in search of a Catholic priest to hear Juan Bernardino's confession and help minister to him on his deathbed.^[4]

To avoid being delayed by the Virgin and ashamed at having failed to meet her on Monday as agreed, Juan Diego chose another route around Tepeyac Hill, yet the Virgin intercepted him and asked where he was going (fourth apparition); Juan Diego explained what had happened and the Virgin gently chided him for not having made recourse to her. In the words which have become the most famous phrase of the Guadalupe apparitions and are inscribed above the main entrance to the Basilica of Guadalupe, she asked "¿No estoy yo aquí que soy tu madre?" ("Am I not here, I who am your mother?"). She assured him that Juan Bernardino had now recovered and told him to gather flowers from the summit of Tepeyac Hill, which was normally barren, especially in the cold of December. Juan Diego obeyed her instruction and he found Castilian roses, not native to Mexico, blooming there.^[4]

According to the story, the Virgin arranged the flowers in Juan Diego's *tilmàtli* or cloak, and when Juan Diego opened his cloak later that day before Archbishop Zumárraga, the flowers fell to the floor, revealing on the fabric the image of the Virgin.^[4]

The next day, December 13, Juan Diego found his uncle fully recovered as the Virgin had assured him, and Juan Bernardino recounted that he also had seen her after praying at his bedside (fifth apparition); that she had instructed him to inform the Archbishop of this apparition and of his miraculous cure; and that she had told him she desired to be known under the title of "Guadalupe".^[4]

The Archbishop kept Juan Diego's mantle, first in his private chapel and then in the church on public display, where it attracted great attention. On December 26, 1531, a procession formed to transfer the miraculous image back to Tepeyac Hill where it was installed in a small, hastily erected chapel.^[7] During this procession, the first miracle was allegedly performed when a native was mortally wounded in the neck by an arrow shot by accident during some stylized martial displays performed in honor of the Virgin. In great distress, the natives carried him before the Virgin's image and pleaded for his life. Upon the arrow being withdrawn, the victim fully and immediately recovered.^[8]

History

Origin in Guadalupe, Spain

The shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Guadalupe, Cáceres, in Extremadura, Spain, was the most important of the shrines to the Virgin Mary in the medieval Kingdom of Castile.^[9] It is one of the many Black Madonnas in Spain and is revered in the Monastery of Santa María de Guadalupe, in the town of Guadalupe, from which numerous Spanish conquistadors stem.

The most popular etymology of the name "Guadalupe" is from the Arabic "Wadi" (river) and the Latin word "lupus" (wolf). Some find it unlikely that Arabic and Latin would be combined in this way, and suggest as an alternative the Arabic "Wadi-al-lub", signifying a river with black stones in its bed.^[10]

The shrine houses a statue reputed to have been carved by Luke the Evangelist and given to Archbishop Leander of Seville by Pope Gregory I. According to local legend, when Seville was taken by the Moors in 712, a group of priests fled northward and buried the statue in the hills near the Guadalupe River.^[11]

At the beginning of the 14th century, the Virgin appeared one day to a humble cowboy named Gil Cordero who was searching for a missing animal in the mountains.^[12] Cordero claimed that Mary had appeared to him and ordered him to ask priests to dig at the site of the apparition. Excavating priests rediscovered the hidden statue and built a small shrine around it which became the great Guadalupe monastery.^[11]

Origin in Mexico

Following the Conquest in 1519–1521, the Marian cult was brought to the Americas and Franciscan friars often leveraged syncretism with existing religious beliefs as an instrument for evangelization. What is purported by some to be the earliest mention of the miraculous apparition of the Virgin is a page of parchment, the *Codex Escalada* from 1548, which was discovered in 1995 and, according to investigative analysis, dates from the sixteenth century.^[13] This document bears two pictorial representations of Juan Diego and the apparition, several inscriptions in Nahuatl referring to Juan Diego by his Aztec name, and the date of his death: 1548, as well as the year that the then named Virgin Mary appeared: 1531. It also contains the glyph of Antonio Valeriano; and finally, the signature of Fray Bernardino de Sahagun which was authenticated by experts from the Banco de Mexico and Charles E. Dibble.^[14] Historians Alberto Peralta and Stafford Poole questioned the authenticity of the document.^{[15][16]}

A more complete early description of the apparition occurs in a 16-page manuscript called the *Nican mopohua*, which has been reliably dated in 1556 and was acquired by the New York Public Library in 1880. This document, written in Nahuatl, tells the story of the apparitions and the supernatural origin of the image. It was probably composed by a native Aztec man, Antonio Valeriano, who had been educated by Franciscans. The text of this document was later incorporated into a printed pamphlet which was widely circulated in 1649.^{[17][18][19][20]} In spite of these documents, there are no known 16th century written accounts of the Guadalupe vision by the archbishop Juan de Zumárraga.^[21] In particular, the canonical account of the vision features archbishop Juan de Zumárraga as a major player in the story, but, although Zumárraga was a prolific writer, there is nothing in his extant writings that can confirm the indigenous story.^[22]

The written record suggests the Catholic clergy in 16th century Mexico were deeply divided as to the orthodoxy of the native beliefs springing up around the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, with the Franciscan order (who then had custody of the chapel at Tepeyac) being strongly opposed to the outside groups, while the Dominicans supported it.^[23]

The main promoter of the story was the Dominican Alonso de Montúfar, who succeeded the Franciscan Juan de Zumárraga as archbishop of Mexico. In a 1556 sermon Montúfar commended popular devotion to "Our Lady of Guadalupe", referring to a painting on cloth (the tilma) in the chapel of the Virgin Mary at Tepeyac, where certain miracles had also occurred. Days later, Fray Francisco de Bustamante, local head of the Franciscan order, delivered a sermon denouncing the native belief and believers. He expressed concern that the Catholic Archbishop was promoting a superstitious regard for an indigenous image:^[24]

The devotion at the chapel... to which they have given the name Guadalupe was prejudicial to the Indians because they believed that the image itself worked miracles, contrary to what the missionary friars had been teaching them, and because many were disappointed when it did not.

Archbishop Montúfar opened an inquiry into the matter at which the Franciscans repeated their position that the image encouraged idolatry and superstition, and four witnesses testified to Bustamante's statement that the image was painted by an Indian, with one witness naming him "the Indian painter Marcos".^[25] This could refer to the Aztec painter Marcos Cipac de Aquino, who was active at that time.^{[26][27]} A formal inquiry into the image of Guadalupe was made in 1556 and does not mention the legend or its central character Juan Diego, which are mentioned in the *Huei tlamahuiçoltica* published in 1649.^[28] The report of the 1556 investigation stated that the image had been painted by a native artist the previous year.^{[29][30]}

Prof. Jody Brant Smith, referring to Philip Serna Callahan's examination of the tilma using infrared photography in 1979, wrote: "if Marcos did, he apparently did so without making a preliminary sketches – in itself then seen as a near-miraculous procedure... Cipac may well have had a hand in painting the Image, but only in painting the additions, such as the angel and moon at the Virgin's feet."^[31]

Ultimately Archbishop Montúfar, himself a Dominican, decided to end Franciscan custody of the shrine.^[32] From then on the shrine was kept and served by diocesan priests under the authority of the archbishop.^[33] Moreover, Archbishop Montúfar authorized the construction of a much larger church at Tepeyac, in which the tilma was later mounted and displayed.^[34]

In the late 1570s, the Franciscan historian Bernardino de Sahagún denounced the cult at Tepeyac and the use of the name "Tonantzín" or to call her Our Lady in a personal digression in his *General History of the Things of New Spain*, also known as the "Florentine Codex":

At this place [Tepeyac], [the Indians] had a temple dedicated to the mother of the gods, whom they called Tonantzin, which means Our Mother. There they performed many sacrifices in honor of this goddess ... And now that a church of Our Lady of Guadalupe is built there, they also called her Tonantzin, being motivated by those preachers who called Our Lady, the Mother of God, Tonantzin. While it is not known for certain where the beginning of Tonantzin may have originated, but this we know for certain, that, from its first usage, the word refers to the ancient Tonantzin. And it was viewed as something that should be remedied, for their having [native] name of the Mother of God, Holy Mary, instead of Tonantzin, but *Dios inantzin*. It appears to be a Satanic invention to cloak idolatry under the confusion of this name, Tonantzin. And they now come to visit from very far away, as far away as before, which is also suspicious, because everywhere there are many churches of Our Lady and they do not go to them. They come from distant lands to this Tonantzin as in olden times.^[35]

Sahagún's criticism of the indigenous group seems to have stemmed primarily from his concern about a syncretistic application of the native name *Tonantzin* to the Catholic Virgin Mary. However, Sahagún often used the same name in his sermons as late as the 1560s.^[36]

The crown ornament

The image^[which?] had originally featured a 12-point crown on the Virgin's head, but this disappeared in 1887–88. The change was first noticed on February 23, 1888, when the image was removed to a nearby church.^[52] Eventually a painter confessed on his deathbed that he had been instructed by a clergyman to remove the crown. This may have been motivated by the fact that the gold paint was flaking off of the crown, leaving it looking dilapidated. But according to the historian David Brading, "the decision to remove rather than replace the crown was no doubt inspired by a desire to 'modernize' the image and reinforce its similarity to the nineteenth-century images of the Immaculate Conception which were exhibited at Lourdes and elsewhere... What is rarely mentioned is that the frame which surrounded the canvas was adjusted to leave almost no space above the Virgin's head, thereby obscuring the effects of the erasure."^[53]

A different crown was installed to the image. On February 8, 1887, a Papal bull from Pope Leo XIII granted permission a Canonical Coronation of the image, which occurred on October 12, 1895.^[54]

20th century

Since then the Virgin of Guadalupe has been proclaimed "Queen of Mexico", "Patroness of the Americas", "Empress of Latin America", and "Protectress of Unborn Children" (the latter two titles given by Pope John Paul II in 1999).^{[55][56]}

On November 14, 1921, a bomb hidden within a basket of flowers and left under the tilma by an anti-Catholic secularist exploded and damaged the altar of the Basilica that houses the original image, but the tilma was unharmed. A brass standing crucifix, bent by the explosion, is now preserved at the shrine's museum and is believed to be miraculous by devotees.^{[57][58]}

Description

The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is of a life-sized, dark-haired, olive-skinned young woman, standing with her head slightly inclined to her right, eyes downcast, and her hands held before her in prayer. She wears a pink dress ornamented with a floral design, a dark ribbon tied above her waist, and a blue-green mantle over all. The mantle is edged with gold and has golden stars throughout. She stands on a crescent moon, which is supported by an angel with eagle wings. She is surrounded by a golden sunburst.^{[68][69][70]}

The tilma now measures approximately 1.72 meters by 1.07 meters,^[71] though sources vary by a few centimeters, and it shows signs of having been trimmed from the original size. It is made of two pieces of fabric sewn together with cotton thread.^[72] There is a large crack running vertically through the middle of the image, as well as smaller horizontal cracks, caused by the image being folded at some point.^[73]

The image is currently housed in a golden frame above the main altar of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, where it has been since the new basilica was completed in 1976.^[74]

Symbolism

The iconography of the Virgin is fully Catholic:^[75] Miguel Sánchez, the author of the 1648 tract *Imagen de la Virgen María*, described her as the Woman of the Apocalypse from the New Testament's Revelation 12:1, "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." She is described as a representation of the Immaculate Conception.^[63]

Virgil Elizondo says the image also had layers of meaning for the indigenous people of Mexico who associated her image with their polytheistic deities, which further contributed to her popularity.^{[76][77]} Her blue-green mantle was the color reserved for the divine couple Ometecuhtli and Omecihuatl;^[78] her belt is interpreted as a sign of pregnancy; and a cross-shaped image, symbolizing the cosmos and called *nahui-ollin*, is inscribed beneath the image's sash.^[79] She was called "mother of maguey",^[80] the source of the sacred beverage pulque.^[81] Pulque was also known as "the milk of the Virgin".^[82] The rays of light surrounding her are seen to also represent maguey spines.^[80]

Technical analyses

The original *tilma* of Juan Diego, which hangs above the high altar of the Guadalupe Basilica. The suspended crown atop the image dates back to its Canonical Coronation on October 12, 1895. The image is protected by bulletproof glass and low-oxygen atmosphere. The image and *tilma* have been examined numerous times over the years.

Capitular inquiry

In 1662, canons of the cathedral in Mexico City began the process of asking for a proper liturgy for Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12. As part of this request, Rome asked for a canonical investigation into the apparitions. The canons carried out this investigation from 1665–1666,^[83] including an examination of the image in March 1666.^[84]

On March 13, 1666, seven painters examined the image, accompanied by the viceroy and several clerics. The painters unanimously agreed that it was "impossible that any artist could paint and work something so beautiful, clean, and well-formed on a fabric which is as rough as is the *tilma*",^{[85][84]} and that the image must therefore be miraculous. They also

noted the degree of preservation of the image and *tilma*, and that the *tilma* had not been prepared for painting.^[86] On March 28, three members of the *protomédico* of New Spain also examined the image. They also noted how well-preserved the image was given the local climate, and saw this as evidence of the image's supernatural origin.^[87] In contrast, the silver of the moon and the gold on the sunburst, which had both been added to the original, were faded.^[84]

Cabrera On April 30, 1751, a group of eight painters headed by José de Ibarra were allowed to examine the image. On April 15, 1752, one of the painters, Miguel Cabrera, was again allowed access to the image in order to create three copies.^{[88][89]} In 1756, Cabrera published his account of the image, approved by the other painters, entitled *Maravilla Americana*.^[89] Like the previous report, Cabrera noted the preservation of the image despite the climate. He said that the *tilma* was two pieces of cloth sewn together, and that it felt soft, probably made of *ayate* fibers rather than the coarser *maguey*, as others had claimed. He discovered signs of four different painting techniques which he claimed had never been used in combination before. He said that the image had not been sized, and thus the image could be seen through the back of the cloth, though all but a small portion of the back was covered with silver at the time.^{[90][91]}

Bartolache In 1787, another group of painters examined the image at the request of José Ignacio Bartolache [es], a doctor and mathematician. They confirmed Cabrera's opinion that the fabric of the *tilma* was not coarse, but determined that it was of palm fibers. Contrary to Cabrera, however, they claimed that the image had been sized beforehand, and was not visible from behind; however, four years later, two of the painters claimed that they had never seen the back of the image and did not know if it had been sized.^[92] The artists came to the conclusion that the parts of the image that were original were of divine origin, though they noted that there were some touch-ups that were clearly the work of human hands, the first study to so note.^{[92][89]}



Flores Gómez Art restorer José Antonio Flores Gómez was hired by the abbot of the basilica to work on the image in 1947 and 1973. In a 2002 interview with the magazine *Proceso*, he spoke about his experience. He noted that he had not been required to keep silent about his work, but had done so of his own accord.^[73] When he examined the image in 1947, he saw a large crack in the paint running vertically through the middle of the image, as well as some smaller horizontal cracks, which he thought were caused by the image having been folded. He also saw signs that others had touched up the image at various points. The necessity of touching up the image convinced him that it was of human origin.^[73] Like others, Flores Gómez noted the softness of the *tilma*, which seemed to him more like cotton than the rougher agave traditionally claimed. He also said that the paints used in the image came from natural pigments, such as from the cochineal.^[73]

Callahan and Smith In 1981, Philip Serna Callahan and Jody Brant Smith examined the image under infrared light, a common technique in art analysis. They were unable to find any trace of sizing or sketching underneath the paint. They concluded that, while there had been additions to and touch-ups of the image, which were in a poor state, there was no explanation for the original parts of the image or their preservation.^[93]
Sol Rosales

In 1982, Guillermo Schulenburg, abbot of the basilica, hired José Sol Rosales of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura to study the image. Sol Rosales thought that the *tilma* was made of linen and hemp, and not either agave or cotton. Contrary to previous claims, he said that the fabric had been prepared with white paint before the image had been painted. He saw several different styles of tempera throughout the image. He held that the paints were made from various natural pigments, and further noted that all of these pigments were commonly available in 16th-century Mexico. Like Flores Gómez, Sol Rosales saw various touch-ups and repainting throughout the image.^[94]

Sol Rosales concluded that the image was of human origin. He claimed that others, like Cabrera, had had similar findings, but concluded that the image was divine due to social pressures.^[94] Sol Rosales and his team were supervised during the investigation by Schulenburg and others. Schulenburg sent the results of this study to the Vatican, cautioning against the canonization of Juan Diego.^[73]

Studies on the eyes Several studies have examined the eyes of the image. The authors of these studies claim that they have found images in the eyes corresponding to the people believed to have been present when Juan Diego opened his *tilma* before the bishop. The eyes are also claimed to contain Purkinje images exactly where they would be expected to be found in living eyes.^[95]

Critics of these studies liken the figures to inkblots in which proponents see what they hope to see.^[96]

Visual arts



Digital recreation of the face of Our Lady of Guadalupe.