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Decembre 12, 2026 – *Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas*
National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

Engaging with Indigenous Cultures... Through Roses

Overview and Theme of the Day

Since 2002, at the initiative of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples has been celebrated annually on December 12, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who was proclaimed Patroness of the Americas in 1946 by Pope Pius XII. The devotion dates back to 1531, when the Virgin appeared as an Aztec princess to a humble Indigenous peasant, Saint Juan Diego, at a place called Mount Tepeyac, which is now part of Villa de Guadalupe, a suburb of Mexico City.

This year, reflecting on the event of Guadalupe enables us to rediscover the roses in the Virgin's approach to her Aztec people. This reflection echoes the message delivered by Pope Leo XIV on the occasion of the Pastoral-Theological Congress on the event of Guadalupe, held in February 2026. The Pope writes: "In the tilma, among painted roses, the Good News enters the symbolic world of a people and makes its closeness visible, offering its newness

without violence or coercion¹." We therefore propose a theme that invites us to let ourselves be touched by the Virgin of Guadalupe's approach:

Entering into the culture of peoples... with roses

Our resource sheet is intended to be a bouquet of roses in honour of the growing fraternity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. It carries the hope that we may continue to grow together in God's love and allow ourselves to be transformed by our respective human and cultural experiences.

Mission chez nous encourages you to take part in this special day. By encouraging as many people as possible to participate in this annual gathering of prayer and reflection, our organization hopes that genuine solidarity will take root and flourish between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

1. Message from pope Leo XIV on the occasion of the Theological-Pastoral Congress on the Guadalupean Event, in February 2026.
<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2026/documents/20260205-messaggio-congresso-guadalupe.html>

The Story of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The text reproduced here is an excerpt from the article titled “Remembering... the Bridge to Be Built Between Us,” written by the Mission chez nous team and originally published in the newspaper *Le Quotidien* of Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean on December 14, 2024.

From 1531 to the Present

“On December 9, 1531, as the Aztec Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin—who had converted to Catholicism following the arrival of the conquistadors and the fall of the Aztec Empire—was walking to Mexico City, the Virgin Mary appeared to him on Tepeyac Hill. She spoke to him in his own language, asking him to build a church on that spot and to convey this request to the city’s bishop. But the bishop, refusing to believe the peasant, asked the Virgin to give him a convincing sign.

“On December 12, Mary appeared again to Juan Diego and asked him to go pick roses on the hill, even though it was not the season for them. He found the flowers and wrapped them in his *tilma*, a tunic worn by peasants. He went to the bishop’s residence and presented the roses to him. When the roses fell from his garment, an image of the Virgin, with indigenous features and a robe adorned with Aztec symbols, was imprinted on the fabric. The bishop was thus convinced of the authenticity of the request. A chapel was subsequently built on the site. The relic, bearing the image of the one who would come to be known as Our Lady of Guadalupe, would be housed there. This image would inspire great devotion in Mexico.

“Five centuries later, the cloth bearing this extraordinary image is still on display at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe north of Mexico City. It is in an exceptional state of preservation, defying the laws of physics, given that this type of fragile tunic usually lasts no more than 20 years. In the 20th century, several scientists studied this relic, convinced that it was a painting. They discovered that the pigments used in it were of a completely un-

known origin. Furthermore, according to their analysis, the image—of perfect quality—was imprinted on both sides of the fabric, something technically impossible, as if the fabric had behaved like photographic film. And many other findings from their observations continue to astonish!



“The Church saw it as a sign from God. Likewise, according to 16th-century historians, it is clear that this piece of cloth prevented a genocide. Faced with the colonists’ brutality, the Aztecs were on the verge of launching a revolt, which the Spaniards would then have ruthlessly suppressed. The fact that the Virgin chose an Aztec spokesperson had enormous repercussions on both sides. In 1537, Pope Paul III declared that Indigenous peoples

have souls, that they are human beings who cannot be deprived of their freedom or their property. He thus affirmed the dignity of Indigenous peoples².

“Since then, the figures of Saint Juan Diego, ‘protector and defender of Indigenous peoples,’ and Our Lady of Guadalupe have been seen as a unifying bridge between the indigenous, mestizo, and European-descended populations of the Americas. Their role, even today, is to inspire us by inviting us to build bridges between one another.”

A Model of Encounter with Christ

In fact, Pope Leo XIV reminds us that the event at Guadalupe is “a place of encounter with Christ³. He invites us to embrace “the languages, symbols, ways of thinking, feeling and expressing oneself of each people, not only as external vehicles of proclamation, but as real places where grace desires to dwell and act⁴.” The history of the encounter between the Christian faith and Indigenous culture is replete with these “real places where grace desires to dwell and act”.

Let us mention a few of these places:

- Nahuatl, Juan Diego’s native language, in which the Virgin addressed him.
- Juan Diego’s *tilma*, a cactus-fiber cloak worn by Aztec peasants, upon which the Virgin imprints her face.
- The roses that appeared in the middle of winter on the barren hill of Tepeyac. These “Castilian roses,” a miraculous sign requested by the bishop and picked by Juan Diego, are a symbol of the fusion between Spanish tradition and Aztec spirituality.
- The portrait of the Virgin Mary⁵: her indigenous features; her robe adorned with Aztec symbols printed on the fabric; her posture of dancing prayer, the highest form of prayer for the Nahuas; and around her neck, the medallion with a cross, indicating that she belongs to the Christian faith brought by the Spaniards.

These cultural traits are just a few elements of the Virgin of Guadalupe’s respectful and loving approach to her Aztec people: a source of inspiration for our world today.

The 50th anniversary of the dedication of the new Basilica of Santa María de Guadalupe

As a matter of fact, Mexico celebrates this year the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the new Basilica of Santa María de Guadalupe and the transfer of the Sacred Image to the new sanctuary.

On this occasion, Pope Leo XIV granted the Guadalupean Jubilee Year from October 12, 2026 until October 12, 2027.

The opening of the Jubilee coincides with another milestone in the history of the sanctuary: the 131 years of the Pontifical Coronation of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Cardinal Carlos Aguiar Retes, Primate Archbishop of Mexico, has invited the faithful to live this period as a path of “spiritual renewal and conversion¹.”

1. <https://infovaticana.com/en/2026/09/14/the-guadalupe-jubilee-year-begins-for-the-50th-anniversary-of-the-new-basilica-of-guadalupe/>

2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sublimis_Deus

3. <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2026/documents/20260205-messaggio-congresso-guadalupe.html>

4. *Ibid.*

5. The symbols in the portrait of the Virgin Mary are taken from an Aleteia editorial article—published on December 12, 2013—and updated on December 11, 2024. This is a free translation of the original French text. <https://fr.aleteia.org/2013/12/12/que-sont-les-apparitions-de-guadalupe/>

Prayers and suggestions for activities proposed and written by Pascale Haddad, a collaborator of Mission chez nous.



Praying for Solidarity Among Us, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous People

Tailored Resources for your community

The suggestions presented here have been designed to fit various liturgical contexts and to allow you to share them with your faith community (printed handout, projection during a celebration, social media, newsletter, etc.). Mission chez nous hopes to offer you these “ready-to-use” resources to foster moments of prayer in solidarity with Indigenous peoples on December 12 or around that date.

Universal Prayer Intention (Short Prayer)

This intention can be included in the universal prayer (during the Mass on December 12, or during the Sunday Mass preceding or following that date). A visual featuring this prayer intention is available. It can be projected on a screen, printed, or shared on social media and in the community’s newsletter. You can find it here:

<https://missioncheznous.com/ressources/>

On this National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples, we pray to you, Blessed Mother of Guadalupe:
Make the heart of our great human family blossom anew.
Restore the sense of God to our brothers and sisters who have lost it.
Enable us to become a sign for them and for ourselves.
Grant us the joy of coming together, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, to contemplate your Son with the eyes of the heart.

Blessed Mother of Guadalupe, hear our prayer. **R/**

Note: This brief prayer intention may be followed by the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the participants, each in their native language. A brochure containing translations of the Lord’s Prayer into the languages of Quebec’s eleven Indigenous nations is available on the website of the Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops:

https://eveques catholiques.quebec/sn_uploads/CES---Prier-en-langue-autochtone-au-Quebec.pdf

6. *Nopales*: a type of cactus; *mezquites*: thorny shrubs.

General Prayer (Long Prayer)

This prayer may be read during an assembly, for example, on 12 December at Mass, or on a Sunday Mass before or after that date. It may be projected onto a screen or printed and distributed during the celebrations. At the same time, you can share the prayer on social media and in your community’s newsletter—we encourage you to do so! A visual has been prepared for this purpose. It is available here:

<https://missioncheznous.com/ressources/>

In the Footsteps of Saint Juan Diego

Our Lady of Guadalupe,
You call us by our first names,
with infinite tenderness:
“Juanito, Juan Dieguito”;
“Juan, the humblest of my sons.”
You allow us to respond to you,
with hesitation and tenderness:
“Madame, the youngest of my daughters,
my Child.”

You help us climb the hills of our lives
to see you through the *nopales* and *mezquites*⁶
that line our paths.
You welcome us with the sweet,
delightful song of birds.
You walk back down with us
through villages and mountains.

You invite us to pick
the most beautiful roses
we have ever seen.
You do not count them to reveal your love to us.
You cover them with dewdrops.
You perfume them like incense pleasing to God.

You take the roses we offer you
into your hands.
You place them in the *tilma* of our hearts.
Then, you send us out
to our brothers and sisters.
To proclaim the Joy of the Encounter.

You ask us to do the same:
To call one another by name gently.
And to set out again, side by side
On the land of our ancestors,
toward the sacred home of your Son.
Amen.

For an activity in community or at home

On the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we offer a guided meditation based on the spiritual experience of Juan Diego.

The meditation consists of three steps:

1. *Individual reflection:* Take a moment to imagine what it would be like to be Juan Diego in your own reality today. If an image of the Virgin appeared on your cloak, reflect consider the following:

- What kind of flowers would you pick and place in your cloak?
- What features, symbols, and colors would you like to see imprinted on the fabric?
- To whom would you carry this sign, inviting them to contemplate the image with their heart and mind?

2. *Sharing:* If you're doing this activity alone, offer the fruits of your meditation to Our Lady of Guadalupe in your heart. If you're doing this activity with a group, you're invited to share your meditation with your fellow participants.

3. *A collaborative visual creation:* Express your thoughts through images and create a collective work.

On the following page, you will find two drawings—a rose and a tilma—that you can use and reproduce for reflection or visual creation.

Founded in 1993 by the Archdiocese of Montreal at the request of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Quebec, the charity Mission Chez Nous seeks to promote Christian solidarity with Indigenous peoples. The organization raises awareness among the general public about Indigenous realities and fosters closer ties between cultures, by countering prejudice and encouraging dialogue. The charity offers material and moral support to Indigenous communities living in the territory now known as Quebec.

www.missioncheznous.com

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Rose and *tilma*
to be used for reflection
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