

## St. Juan Diego



**1474-1548**

**Feast Day:**  
December 9

Juan Diego was born in Mexico where he lived with his uncle. One December morning while walking to church, Juan saw the Virgin Mary standing on Tepeyac hill. The Virgin asked Juan to tell the bishop that she wanted a chapel built on the hill, as a haven for everyone who called on her help. Juan told the bishop, but the bishop asked Juan to come back another day. As Juan walked back past Tepeyac hill, Mary appeared to him and encouraged him.

When Juan returned to the bishop, the bishop asked for a sign. Mary visited Juan as he walked home, and she promised him a sign the next day. But the next day, Juan's uncle was so sick that Juan had to stay home with him. The following day, Juan hurried to church to find a priest to prepare his uncle for death. Juan did not want to stop and explain to Mary why he had not come for the promised sign, so Juan took a different route to the church. Mary appeared to Juan anyway. She told him he ought always to ask her for help. "Am I not here," she said, "I who am your mother?" Then she told Juan that his uncle was cured. She instructed Juan to climb up the barren cliff and pick roses. There Juan found many blooming roses, and Mary arranged them in the folds of his cloak. When Juan unfolded his cloak before the bishop, the roses fell to the ground. On Juan's cloak was an image of the Virgin Mary. When Juan went home, his uncle was healed. His uncle told him that Mary had also visited him and wanted Juan to tell the bishop about his miraculous cure.

The bishop agreed to build a chapel on Tepeyac hill, and Juan moved there to care for the chapel and grounds. Juan died seventeen years later. Today, St. Juan Diego's cloak (also called a mantle or *tilma*) is in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. It is the most visited Catholic pilgrimage site in the world.