



## *La Guadalupana / The Lady of Guadalupe* (Based on events said to have occurred in 1531)

*This folk song retells a traditional story about how the Virgin Mary appeared, ten years after the Spanish conquered the Aztec empire, to an indigenous man who had been given the Christian name Juan Diego. According to the story, Mary appeared to Juan Diego and instructed him to go tell the Spanish bishop to build a church in her honor. The bishop didn't believe Juan Diego, so Mary caused flowers to grow in the winter as a miraculous sign. Juan Diego carried the flowers to the bishop bundled in the front of his tilma, a poncho-like garment; when he released the flowers from the tilma in the bishop's presence, an image of Mary was revealed to be miraculously emblazoned on the tilma. According to believers, the tilma, bearing the miraculous image, now hangs in a shrine erected on the hill of Tepeyac, in Mexico City, where Mary appeared to Juan Diego.*

*The song refers to Mary by the Spanish title La Guadalupana, "the Lady of Guadalupe," Guadalupe being a town in Spain where there had been a famous shrine to Mary since late medieval times. The song is notable for describing Mary as being "Mexican" in her physical appearance.*

Desde el cielo una hermosa mañana  
la Guadalupana  
bajó al Tepeyac.

Su llegada llenó de alegría,  
de paz y armonía  
todo el Anáhuac.

Junto al monte pasaba Juan Diego  
y acercóse luego  
al oír cantar.

Juan Dieguito, la Virgen le dijo,  
este cerro elijo  
para hacer mi altar.

Suplicante juntaba las manos  
y eran mexicanos  
su porte y su faz.

Y en la tilma entre rosas pintada  
su imagen amada  
se dignó dejar.

Desde entonces para el mexicano  
ser guadalupano  
es algo esencial.

From heaven, one beautiful morning,  
the Lady of Guadalupe  
descended to the hill of Tepeyac.

Her arrival filled with happiness,  
with peace and harmony,  
the whole valley of Anáhuac.

Juan Diego was passing by the hill,  
and he drew closer  
when he heard singing.

"My dear Juan Diego," the Virgin said to him,  
"I choose this hill  
for the making of my altar."

Her hands were pressed together in supplication,  
and her physical appearance and her face  
were Mexican.

And painted on his tilma, among roses,  
her beloved image  
she deigned to leave.

Ever since then, for Mexicans  
being a devotee of Guadalupe  
is something essential.

En sus penas se postra de hinojos  
y eleva sus ojos  
hacia el Tepeyac.

In their pains, they bow on their knees  
and lift their eyes  
toward the hill of Tepeyac

**Source:** Mexican folk song. Public domain. English translation by John-Charles Duffy.



© 2021, 2026 by John-Charles Duffy. Except as otherwise noted, this work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial–ShareAlike 4.0 International License, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

All rights are reserved for the flag-shaped “Empire and American Religion” logo; if you alter this work, you may not reproduce the logo. Use of the Creative Commons license icon is subject to the Creative Commons Trademark Policy.