



December 12, 2025 – *Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas*
National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

Remembering... the Bridge to Be Built Between Us.

Presentation and Meaning of the Day

Since 2002, the National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples has been celebrated each year on December 12, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. She was proclaimed the Patroness of the Americas in 1946 by Pope Pius XII. This devotion began in 1531 when the Virgin appeared to a humble Indigenous peasant named Juan Diego, as an Aztec princess at a place called Mount Tepeyac. This site is now part of Villa de Guadalupe, a suburb of Mexico City.

Mission chez nous encourages you to participate in this special day. This year, we propose a theme that invites us to discover the history behind the devo-

tion to Our Lady of Guadalupe. We are encouraged to draw inspiration from the message offered by this historic event and to work according to God's will to rebuild bridges, initiate dialogue, and live in brotherhood between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples.

Remembering... the Bridge to Be Built Between Us.

Our organization hopes to foster genuine solidarity between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous communities by encouraging as many people as possible to participate in this annual gathering of prayer and reflection.

The Story of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Meaning of This Day

This article, written by the Mission chez nous team, originally appeared in the *Le Quotidien du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean* newspaper on December 14, 2024. It can be read during a group reflection or used as inspiration for a homily.

Remembering... the Bridge to Be Built Between Us

On December 9, 1531, the Aztec Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, who had converted to Catholicism after the arrival of the conquistadors and the fall of the Aztec Empire, was walking to Mexico City when the Virgin Mary appeared to him on Tepeyac Hill. She spoke to him in his language, asking him to build a church on that spot and to convey this request to the city's bishop. However, the bishop dismissed him in disbelief and asked that Juan Diego provide proof of the Lady's identity.

On December 12, Mary reappeared to Juan Diego and told him to pick roses on the hill, despite it not being the season. He found the flowers and wrapped them in his tilma, a tunic worn by peasants. He went to the bishop and presented him with the roses. When the roses fell from his garment, an image of the Virgin with indigenous features and a dress adorned with Aztec symbols was imprinted on the fabric. The bishop was then convinced of the truth of the request. A chapel was built on the site. It housed the relic bearing the image of the woman who would be called Our Lady of Guadalupe and inspire great devotion in Mexico.

Five centuries later, the fabric bearing this extraordinary image remains on display at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in northern Mexico City. It is in an exceptional state of preservation, defying the laws of physics; this type of fragile tunic typically lasts no more than 20 years. Several scientists studied this relic in the 20th century, convinced that it was a painting. They found that the pigments used to create the image were of an unknown origin. Similarly, according to their expertise, the high-quality image was printed on both sides of the

fabric, which is technically impossible. It's as if the fabric had behaved like photographic film! Many other results of their observations continue to surprise!



A Revolutionary Sign?

The Church saw it as a sign from God. According to 16th-century historians, this piece of cloth clearly prevented genocide. Faced with the brutality of the colonists, the Aztecs were on the verge of revolt, which the Spanish would have suppressed with great cruelty. The Virgin's choice of an Aztec spokesperson had enormous repercussions on both

sides. In 1537, Pope Paul III decreed that Indigenous peoples had souls. Killing them became a sin! Since then, Saint Juan Diego, the “protector and defender of Indigenous peoples,” and Our Lady of Guadalupe have been seen as a unifying bridge between Indigenous, Mestizo, and European populations in the Americas. Even today, they inspire us by inviting us to build bridges. The memory of Our Lady of Guadalupe is emphasized on December 12 in the liturgical calendar, when she is celebrated as the Patroness of the Americas, a title bestowed by Pope Pius XII. Since 2002, the Church in Canada has also observed this day as the National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples, an initiative of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Praying ‘for’ or Praying ‘with’ Someone?

Have you ever asked yourself, “What difference does the wording ‘pray for’ or ‘pray with’ imply when I pray for or with someone?” We sense that these two attitudes are very different.

‘Praying for’ someone expresses affection and a need felt in God’s presence. ‘Praying with’ someone, on the other hand, is more of an expression of communion, which cannot take place if the “two parties” praying together are not in agreement.

Praying for others is an imperative of the Christian life. ‘Praying for others’ is often exercised where communion is not possible. On this December 12, we are invited to a future of solidarity and to ‘pray with’ Indigenous peoples.

The story of Our Lady of Guadalupe recounts an unexplained phenomenon, but it is also part of our history, leading us from ‘for’ to ‘with’. Is this not a prophetic call from God, manifesting his desire for us to draw closer to one another? Does this revisited phenomenon not allow us today to recognize the richness and contributions of indigenous peoples to society? Is it not an invitation to treat each other as equals and disregard our prejudices? In short, an invitation to draw closer to one another in order to be in communion?

Certainly, to achieve this, we must be in agreement in order to walk together. This “walking together” implies that we must take an interest in each other from the outset. We must open ourselves to our diverse cultures and the challenges they face, and take an interest in each other’s discoveries, knowledge, and histories.

Adopting this attitude will allow us to open ourselves to a communion that will lead us to a more united future.

Praying in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

*Prayers and
suggested
adaptations
written and
proposed by
Pascale Haddad,
a collaborator of
Mission chez
Nous.*

Resources Adapted to your Community

These suggestions have been designed to fit different liturgical contexts and can be shared with your faith community in various ways (printed leaflet, projection

during a celebration, social media, newsletter, etc.). Mission chez nous offers these ready-to-use resources to encourage moments of prayer in solidarity with Indigenous peoples on or around December 12.

Universal Prayer Intention (Short Prayer)

This intention may be included in the universal prayer during Mass on December 12 or the preceding or following Sunday. A visual incorporating this prayer intention is available. It can be projected on a screen, printed, or shared on social media and in the community 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 Our Lady of Guadalupe:
Let your call to Juan Diego,
“Am I not here, I who am your mother?”,
resound among our children and young people.
Strengthen the mothers
whom you embrace with your arms.
Bring forth your Son in the hearts
of our great human family.

Blessed Our Lady of Guadalupe, hear our prayer.
R/

General Prayer (Longer Version)

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

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

Mother Mary of Guadalupe,
We come to meet you today,
as you have wished since 1531,
Indigenous and Non-Indigenous pilgrims alike,
in a burst of life from the Creator.

We come to meet you,
all dressed in traditional tilmas,
like Juan Diego's,
asking you to imprint on us
your face of goodness
so we may reflect it to one another.

We come to meet you,
searching for roses,
among the cacti and thorns of our lives,
asking you to help us offer them to one another
in a bouquet of hope.

We leave our encounter with you,
Indigenous and Non-Indigenous pilgrims alike,
Our faces radiant with prayer,
Our hearts filled with your maternal love
for one another.

For a Catechetical Activity in a Community or at Home

In honor of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we present a guided meditation based on an image of Saint Juan Diego (see the next page).

The meditation consists of four steps:

1. *Observation*: Take a moment to look at the image in silence. Invite God to speak to your heart in prayer. Observe the shapes, colors, movements, and characters. What catches your attention? Imagine yourself in the image. Which part of the image speaks to you?
2. *Sharing Time*: You are invited to share your observations.
3. *Prayer Time*: Do your observations bring back an experience with the Virgin Mary or memories of someone like Juan Diego? Let a prayer of thanksgiving or supplication spring forth from within you.
4. *Sharing Time*: You are invited to express your prayer aloud or silently.

Image of St. Juan Diego to be Used for a Catechesis Activity.

To download the color image and use it for meditation, visit:

<https://missioncheznous.com/ressources/#jour-nat-priere-solidarite>



Image source: Painting of Saint Juan Diego from the San Xavier del Bac Mission church, near Tucson, Arizona.
Artist unknown. Photo by: Lawrence Lew, O.P.

Founded in 1993, 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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/missioncheznous | **X:** twitter.com/MissionChezNous