

# *Immaculate Immigrant*

## Virgin of Guadalupe

(Courtesy of Father Xavier Escalada, S.J.)

## *Virgin of Guadalupe—Mother of God*

*“Know for sure . . . that I am . . . the Mother of God . . .*

*I am truly your compassionate mother . . . and of all the other  
people of different ancestries.”*

*A tribute to the Mexican immigrants who brought her to Los Angeles.*

Website

3-27-11

“River Crossing”

John V. Montelongo

The miracle of the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe broke the mold of all Marian apparitions. Her shrine, in The Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City, is the most visited pilgrimage site in the world (15,000,000 to 18,000,000), more people than Fatima in Portugal, Lourdes in France, Czestochowa in Poland—and even Mecca.

The title, *Immaculate Immigrant*, is appropriate because she has emigrated thousands and thousands of times, coming and going, with the immigrants and the children of immigrants who came to know her through the collective consciousness of their parents and grandparents and **their** parents and grandparents, dating back to 1531. The standard of Our Lady of Guadalupe was also Mexico's first flag of independence in 1810. In 2011, she continues to be a living and loving force.

One of the greatest contributions the Mexican community has made in the United States is to preserve the meaningful concept of what Our Lady of Guadalupe represents in their lives: maternal love, hope, trust, interaction, and a symbol of resistance to oppression. The first three representations enhanced their lives; interaction and activism embodied their resolve to attain peace and justice.

Guadalupe has of course emigrated globally, but in California and particularly in Los Angeles, she has captivated the hearts and minds of activists and artists. Through the

years, in public art, it has been estimated that some 1000 images of Guadalupe have been painted in the City of Los Angeles: unprecedented in any other city in the world.

The Virgin of Guadalupe first appeared in 1531 to Juan Diego, (Cuauhtlactōatzin), in the center of the Americas before the United States existed. She asked that a sacred place be built for her where she would reveal God to the people and listen to their weeping and comfort them. She promised to help and protect them.

In a matter of days, the image of Guadalupe remained imprinted on Juan Diego's cloak/*tilma*, and within seven years after her apparition some eight million Mexican Indians were baptized into the Catholic faith, probably the greatest "conversion" in the history of the Roman Catholic Church.

Since 1531, her image has been inexorably venerated and scientifically scrutinized. The findings are transcendental. Guadalupe has inspired scholars of history, anthropology, medicine, engineering, astronomy, law, poetry, science, philosophy, photography, art, culture, and music.

This website begins with the scientific discoveries of her image. A glimmering of her history follows with a gleaning of illustrations of artistic expressions on Guadalupe including photographs of the celebrated photojournalists, Don Normark and George Rodriguez

Lastly, the story of the apparition. It was originally written in Nahuatl, the primary spoken language of the indigenous Mexicans of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is the core written evidence of the miracle and provides a graphic space of its historical existence. It is worth a thousand pictures. The narrative is known as the *Nican Mopohua*. These two words refer to the first words of the Guadalupan Event: "Here is told . . ."

Considered classical literature, it has been translated into Latin, Spanish, English, German, Italian, French, Polish, Japanese, Tagalog, as well as nine indigenous languages: Aymara, Quechua, Ch'ol, Maya, Tzotzil, Chatino, Zoque, Otomí, and Mazahua.

The *Nican Mopohua* is one of the great literary treasures of the Americas, and it is the first documented "Story of the First Miracle of the Americas."

The Constellations in the Sky on December 12, 1531

Janet Barber, I.H.M.

Dr. Juan Homero Hernández Illescas, medical doctor and amateur astronomer, discovered that the stars on the cloak of the Virgin of Guadalupe represent the constellations appearing in the winter-morning solstice in 1531 at the moment of the appearance of the image on the cloak in Bishop Zumárraga's office, "with admirable exactness,"<sup>1</sup> even though the constellations are reversed. Hernández attributes the reversal and "condensing" of the constellations to the phenomenon of *anamorphosis*, "making a semi-spherical reality intelligible on a flat plane."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Janet Barber, I.H.M., clarifies,

The Image's constellations are really spread over the whole dome of

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1 Dr. Juan Homero Hernández Illescas, Reverend Mario Rojas, Mons. and Enrique R. Salazar S., *La Virgen de Guadalupe y las Estrellas* (México, 1995) p. 19.

2 Dr. Janet Barber, "Mary of Guadalupe: Queen of the Cosmos." Los Angeles, California, May 27, 2001. p. 2., citing and translating the Spanish into English. Hernández, Rojas, and Mons. Enrique R. Salazar S., *La Virgen de Guadalupe y las Estrellas* (México: Centro de Estudios Guadalupanos, 1995), pp. 14, 81-87.

the sky . . . But when such an image is reflected on a properly curved mirror to condense and straighten things out, of course the image ends up facing in the other direction! I believe this finally answers the question of why the constellations are backwards on her Image . . . Many, many galaxies and star clusters can be interpolated on the Image, just as constellations can.<sup>3</sup>

Guadalupe's cloak has forty-six stars: twenty-two on her right side and twenty-four on her left side, matching the constellations in the sky present on December 12, 1531.

## Virgin of Guadalupe

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<sup>3</sup> Barber, "Mary of Guadalupe." p. 2. Barber has also given her interpolation of the Milky Way, our home galaxy, on the reversed Image, as well as the position of Halley's Comet on the morning of the winter solstice.

(Courtesy of Father Xavier Escalada, S.J.)

## Infrared Photography of the Cloak/ *Tilma*

In 1979, Jody Brant Smith, philosophy professor, and Dr. Philip Serna Callahan, entomologist-biophysicist, photographer and artist, examined the cloak and found no brushstrokes, undersketch or sizing of any type on the original image. Based on Callahan's infrared technical analysis and techniques,

The most notable feature of the robe is its remarkable luminosity

. . . It appears to barely lie on the surface of the weave. The pink pigment appears to be inexplicable . . . The infrared photographs prove beyond

doubt that the blue of the mantle and rose of the robe are original and have never been touched up or painted over.<sup>4</sup>

Callahan opines that “. . . after more than four centuries, there is no fading or cracking of the original image [and] the brightness of the turquoise and rose colors [are] . . . bright enough to have been laid on last week.”

In 2001, the late Reverend Mario Rojas Sánchez published the results of his own studies on the tilma, without its protective frame. He witnessed the luminous aureole surrounding her. The radiating light “emanates from her continuously.”<sup>5</sup> And when the cloak is photographed, Rojas Sánchez explains, “The brilliance and changing colors of the image impede an exact photo or film of the image. [And the light between the gold rays] becomes more intense closest to her image and reaches the greatest intensity at the level of her womb.”<sup>6</sup>

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4 Philip Serna Callahan, *The Tilma Under Infra-Red Radiation: An Infrared and Artistic Analysis of the Image of the Virgin Mary in the Basilica of Guadalupe* (Washington, DC: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 1981) pp. 9, 10, 20.

5 Mario Rojas Sánchez. *Guadalupe: Símbolo y Evangelización* (México: Ed. Othón Corona Sánchez, 2001) p. 25.

6 *Ibid.*, 9, 28.

It is here that a four-petaled flower appears, the only four-petaled flower on her tunic—the *nahui ollin*. According to Janet Barber,

It's called the *nahui ollin*, which was the name of the day the Aztecs or Nahuas thought the sun was born on, and the day the sun would die. That's why it's called *la flor solar*, the solar flower, the sun flower. This symbol represented the entire known cosmos for them.<sup>7</sup> It represented both space and time, which they regarded as inextricably just one thing, anticipating Einstein!<sup>8</sup>

Among its many meanings, the *nahui ollin* symbolizes the presence of God, completeness, and the four directions of the universe.

The tilma itself is made of two pieces of maguey fiber cloth which has a life span of about 20-40 years at most, held together by a maguey thread and is typical of the cloaks used by the Nahuas in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries called "*ayates*." The texture is coarse, somewhat like burlap, and the color like unbleached linen. Her figure is four feet eight inches tall, from head to toe.

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7 Janet Barber, "Mary of Guadalupe, Synthesis of the Cosmos." Slide presentation given at Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 14, 2001, p. 4.

8 Janet Barber, "Mary of Guadalupe, Queen of the Cosmos." May 27, 2001, p. 4.

In 1936, Richard Kuhn, German Nobel Prize Winner in Chemistry, analyzed red and yellow fibers from the tilma and determined the materials used to produce what resembled color were unknown to science.

In 1929, photographer Alfonso Marcué González discovered a reflection of a man in the Virgin's eyes while examining a photographic negative of the tilma. In 1951, Carlos Salinas Chávez witnessed the same reflection. In 1956, Dr. Javier J. Torroella Bueno discovered three reflections in the Virgin's eyes, including the distortion of the figures caused by the curvature of the cornea. When Torroella trained the ophthalmoscope's light on the Virgin's eyes, they showed depth and became filled with light.<sup>9</sup> In 1958, Dr. Rafael Torija Lavoignet confirmed Torroella's findings. By 1976, some twenty doctors had confirmed, orally and in writing, the "unexplicable presence" of a man with a beard in the cornea and lenses of the Virgin's eyes.<sup>10</sup>

In 1977, Dr. José Aste Tonsmann, a systems engineer from Cornell University declared the image to be supernatural. He photographed the image and marked it off into one-millimeter squares and then with a computer amplified each square 2,500 times and confirmed the existence of the Purkinje-Sanson images in the eyes. In the iris of the left eye, at least four figures could be seen. Based on his analysis and past portraits of Juan Diego, Tonsmann wrote, "I believe, without fear of error that this person is Juan Diego."<sup>11</sup>

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9 J. J. Benítez, *El misterio de la Virgen de Guadalupe: Sensacionales descubrimientos en los ojos de la Virgen mexicana* (España: Editorial Planeta, 1992) p. 186.

10 Ibid. p. 221.

11 Smith, Jody Brant, *The Image of Guadalupe*, Second and revised edition, (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1994), p. 56.

Recently on July 31, 1997, Father Xavier Escalada, S.J., submitted an extraordinary evidentiary document discovered in a private library in 1995. It has been named “Codex 1548” or “Codex Escalada.” The codex fragment painted on deer skin, and measuring approximately 20 by 13.2 centimeters, has been analyzed more than any other Mexican codex in existence. After professionals of diverse disciplines carefully examined the codex, they unanimously recommended the most exhaustive scientific investigation possible to determine the authenticity and age of the document, focusing on its composition, content of the indigenous writing, inks used, date of execution, and the analysis of the only European signature on the codex, “Fray B. De Sahagún.”

He is considered the first ethnographer of the Americas and wrote the monumental *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* with the assistance of indigenous informants.

In order to preserve the integrity of the codex, Particle Induced X-ray Emission (PIXE) was employed. Experts from the Physics Institute of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)* and the Churubusco Museum Laboratory confirmed that the inks used in Codex 1548 were of natural origin and of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Because of a yellowish patina covering the entire surface, it had been speculated that the codex was free of any tampering. Photographs taken with ultraviolet light confirmed the absence of retouches or modifications.

Center left of Codex 1548 an Indian is kneeling and wearing a cloak knotted over his right shoulder, typical of the sixteenth-century Aztecs. Beneath him are the Nahuatl words: *omomoquili cuauhtlactoztzin*. He appears to be looking at an image of a woman standing on a moon amidst some clouds. Her cloak is embellished with stars. The artwork depicts plants native to the Mexican steppes in the high plateaus. At the upper left, an Indian with a cloak appears looking at an oval-shaped design, like a miniature reproduction of the larger size images. In the bottom right corner another indigenous image is seated and holding a staff of authority. A phonetic-glyph, symbolizing Antonio Valeriano, hovers above his person. Directly beneath him is the name, “Juez Anton Vareliano.” It should be noted that the misspelling of Antonio Valeriano and the dates on the Codex, written “154-8” and “15031” are consistent with the difficulty of the Indians learning a new language (Spanish) and numerals (Arabic).

## Codex 1548

(Courtesy of Father Xavier Escalada, S.J.)

Dr. Charles E. Dibble, University of Utah professor and foremost expert on Bernardino de Sahagún affirmed that the signature, “Fray B. De Sahagún,” on the codex is authentic, and Mexico’s *Banco Central* graphologist expert, Alfonso M. Santillana Rentería, concurred. The authentication of Sahagún’s signature assisted in pinpointing Codex 1548’s possible date of execution.

According to Father Mario Rojas Sánchez, Nahuatl expert, the translation of the Nahuatl inscription (*omomoquili cuauhtlactozin*) on the bottom left of Codex 1548 reads, “Cuauhtlactozin [Juan Diego] died with dignity.” Pope John Paul II canonized Juan Diego a saint on July 31, 2002.

Computer scanning and infrared photography show that the entire codex has never been tampered with in any way whatsoever. The *Enciclopedia Guadalupeña*, Vol. V., is dedicated in its entirety to the investigation of Codex 1548.

The report of the miracle spread so fast that it had to be moved to the small main church until a little chapel was constructed by the Indians on the spot indicated by Juan Diego. The tilma was placed in the chapel after a solemn procession and fiesta on December 26, 1531. The entire community participated.

An ancient Mexican song, *Teponazcuicatl*, originally written for the Goddess of Corn, *Cinteotl*, was re-written to honor the memory of the unforgettable occasion.

With delight I have seen the opening of perfumed  
flowers in thy presence, Holy Mary . . .  
In perfect harmony we dance before you . . .  
In the beauty of the flowers did God create you . . .  
and re-created you, through a sacred painting . . .  
Delicately was your image painted and on the sacred canvas,  
your soul was concealed . . . there, God willing,  
I shall dwell forever.<sup>12</sup>

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12 Original Nahuatl song found in Mexico’s National Library under *Cantares mexicanos*, Romero Salinas, *Juan Diego*, 69-71. English translation cited in Francis Johnston, *The Wonder of Guadalupe: The Origin and Cult of the Miraculous Image of the Blessed Virgin in Mexico* (Tan Books and Publishers, Inc.: Illinois, 1981) pp. 53-54.

The Indians decorated with green sprays and sweet-smelling herbs. There were wind instruments and *danzantes*/ritual dancers “with garlands of branches and a carpet of flowers.”<sup>13</sup> Mexicans danced and sang, “The Virgin is one of us!”<sup>14</sup> Shortly after the image was installed in the new little chapel, Juan Diego moved to Tepeyac to care for the chapel and the image, and the apparition became a matter so public and well-known that even the children sang about it in their games.

For a period of 116 years, after its installation in the little chapel, the tilma was unprotected by glass, and yet was not damaged by the soot of thousands of candles and the corrosive air characteristic of Lake Texcoco.

Ecclesiastical investigations were conducted calling upon native and non-native witnesses to testify under oath in 1666, 1723, 1799, and 1852. Forty-eight witnesses testified, consistently, that they knew through their oral tradition that Juan Diego had lived with his wife, María Lucía, until her death in 1529, and with his uncle until 1531. The depositions led to an archeological investigation of the alleged houses in which the Virgin cured Juan Bernardino, Juan Diego’s uncle, and on October 14, 1963, the first wall of Juan Diego’s house was discovered.

Miguel Cabrera, a Zapotec Indian artist (1695-1768), was deeply impressed with the inexplicable artistic genius of the work itself. The gold resembled the gold dust on butterfly wings and it seemed to be “interwoven” with the textile.

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13 Demarest, Donald and Taylor, Coley eds. *The Dark Virgin, The Book of Our Lady of Guadalupe*. A Documentary Anthology. (New York: Academy Guild Press, 1956) p. 11.

14 Francis Johnston, *The Wonder of Guadalupe*, p. 53, quoting Father Anticoli (*La Virgen del Tepeyac: Compendio Historico-Critico*, p. 45.

Several Nahua/Aztec documents memorialized the Guadalupan Event in *anales* (yearbooks). One yearbook affirms: “1556, 12 *Tecpatl*, Our Lady descended to Tepeyacac; at the same time, there came a smoking star.”<sup>15</sup> These *anales* have inconsistent dates, probably because the various Indian calendric systems began and ended their years at different times and the European calendar was new to them. However, a star did soar through the sky over Mexico on December 12, 1531. In 1705 it was named Halley’s Comet after the astronomer, Edmond Halley, who first determined it to be periodic.

In the War of Independence from Spain (1810-1821), the imagery of the Virgin of Guadalupe became the flag used by Fr. Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla to rally the people. Ignacio Altamirano, a Mexican nationalist of Indian parentage, would later comment on the universally accepted belief in the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe at Tepeyac, and that in the face of the relentless internal strife of the country due to the Spanish conquest, “The cult of the Virgin [of Guadalupe] is the only thing that unites us. . . . Before her altars, mestizos and Indians, aristocrats and commoners, rich and poor, liberals and conservatives are equal.”

Within a few years after the War of Independence from Spain, the Texas Revolt (1835-1836), and the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-1848) ensued, culminating with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in the sacristy of the Basilica of Guadalupe. Some Mexicans left the newly ceded territories of the Southwest while others chose to remain in the United States. Those who remained endured displacement, poverty, and persecution. The Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) along with the Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929) helped produce a massive movement northward or the “Great Migration.” Approximately one-and-a-half million Mexicans migrated northward.

At first, most of the people migrated to southern Arizona and southern Texas, but eventually the *Colonia de Los Angeles*, California, became their home. The Immaculate Immigrant kept them from despair, strengthened their spirit, and motivated their hope

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<sup>15</sup> Xavier Noguez, *Documentos Guadalupanos: Un estudio sobre las fuentes de información tempranas en torno a las marifanías en el Tepeyac* (México: FCE, 1993) p. 52. English translation mine.

and their actions for a better life. As in Mexico, in the United States boys and girls would take on her namesake; churches would be built for her; and her powerful presence would be manifested in the people's on-going pursuit of happiness.

Mexican Americans remained closely linked to their Mexican cousins, coming and going, crossing and re-crossing the borders. When Mexico's new political crisis erupted in the 1930s, it affected the 170,000 Chicano-Mexicanos living in the *Colonia de Los Angeles*, and a spinoff of Mexico's Cristero Rebellion (a fight for religious freedom) followed.

In Los Angeles, Mexicans and Anglo Catholics were urged to sponsor a prayer movement for Catholics suffering persecution in Mexico. The annual procession honoring the Virgin of Guadalupe became the unifying force to call attention to the prayer movement. It would be the 403<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the apparition of the Virgin at Tepeyac.

The procession was advertised in the Catholic and Spanish language press as a memorial service. The Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Boy Scout Drum and Bugle Corps, and the Loyola High School Band participated. It was estimated to be a crowd of 40,000 people. "That *colonia* still recalls this procession as the most popular ever held."<sup>16</sup> Anglos, Italians, Japanese, Irish, Polish and Black Catholics from Banning, Brawley, San Diego, and Santa Barbara walked in the procession. *La Raza* formed the largest ethnic group. A week later San Bernardino staged another procession.

During World War II, the Placita (adjacent to Olvera Street) was the most popular Catholic church for Mexicans in Los Angeles. There were Masses 24 hours a day for visiting priests and military chaplains coming from Union Station who needed to fulfill their obligation to celebrate daily Mass. There was a constant flow of people going in and out. On V-E Day and V-J Day, mothers, wives, and sweethearts of the servicemen who were serving overseas had a thanksgiving with special Masses. The Virgin's

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16 Balderrama, Francisco E., *In Defense of La Raza: The Los Angeles Mexican Consulate and the Mexican Community 1929 to 1936* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982) p. 79.

banner was displayed outside the church, and special thanks were given to her.

North of the Placita, the community of Chavez Ravine (Dodger Stadium today) cherished the comfort of the Virgin's presence in their neighborhood altar. Rose Marie López remembers, "When the soldiers were in the war, mothers used to come to the Virgin and put the flag and pray for them."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Don Normark, *Chavez Ravine, 1949: A Los Angeles Story*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1999) p. 117.

(Chavez Ravine Street Altar)

Photographer: Don Normark

Another Guadalupean community, Lincoln Heights, staged annual processions in the parish with floats and beautiful portrayals of the apparitions. Hortensia Guerrero admired the “*Matachines* (also known as *Danzantes*) singing, dancing and chanting their form of prayer in their beautiful native attire.”

Lalo García, danzante, artist, and muralist, completed an art piece available in Los Angeles (1990s) with her image and Indians dancing in prayer. The Cherubs are crowning her with a cross superimposed on a *Penacho*, an Aztec headpiece. García emphasized, “Through her, through the dancers, the word of Christ, Catholicism is spread.”

<i>GUADALUPE TONANTZIN,</i>	TONANTZIN GUADALUPE,
<i>TU QUE NOS COMPRENDITES</i>	YOU WHO UNDERSTOOD US
<i>Y NOS LLENATES DE AMOR</i>	AND FILLED US WITH LOVE
<i>VENIMOS TODOS TUS HIJOS</i>	WE YOUR CHILDREN COME
<i>A PEDIR TU VENDICION</i>	TO ASK FOR YOUR BLESSING
<i>ASI COMO UNOS TE REZAN</i>	JUST AS SOME PRAY TO YOU
<i>O TE OFRECEN SU CANCION</i>	OR OFFER YOU THEIR SONG
<i>RECIBE PUES NUESTRA DANZA</i>	ACCEPT OUR DANCE AS

*COMO PROFUNDA ORACION*

OUR MOST PROFOUND PRAYER

*“Oración de un Danzante”*

Lalo García

In Los Angeles the Virgin of Guadalupe has served as a mediator for such diverse groups as the United Farmworkers in their on-going struggle in the fields; *Católicos por la Raza* (1960s) marching against a Catholic hierarchy who they felt had abandoned its Mexican flock, and the Chicano Civil Rights Movement (1970s).

This ran parallel to a growing consciousness in the Mexican American community's desire to participate equally in American society. The Virgin of Guadalupe became the core symbol leading their struggle.

In the spring of 1966, Dolores Huerta and César Chávez would lead 100 farmworkers through the San Joaquin Valley to educate and gather support for the striking Filipino and Mexican grape workers and for the first grape boycott, a 343-mile pilgrimage. The Virgin of Guadalupe's image led this march and every march thereafter. Chávez would eventually fast several times in his life. Three fasts lasted over 20 days. His longest fast (1988) lasted 36 days. Chávez believed that,

It's not done out of recklessness . . . [or] a desire to destroy yourself, but it's done out of a deep conviction that we can communicate with people, either those who are for us or against us, faster and more effectively, spiritually, [by fasting] than we can in any other way.<sup>18</sup>

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18 Richard Griswold del Castillo and Richard A. Garcia, *César Chávez: A Triumph of Spirit*, (Oklahoma: University, of Oklahoma Press, 1995) p. 121.

(The Virgin of Guadalupe and César Chávez)

Photographer: George Rodriquez

As the country became more and more conscientiously disapproving of the Vietnam War, Chicanos protested against both it and the disproportionate number of

Mexican Americans fighting in that war. On August 29, 1970, the National Chicano Moratorium march was held in Los Angeles. It was supported by 30,000 people marching in East Los Angeles, the largest anti-Vietnam War demonstration ever held in Los Angeles. Rosalio Muñoz, former UCLA Student Body President, was one of the main organizers of the event, and he remembers that “She [the Virgin of Guadalupe] was there.”

A “spiritual renaissance” emerged as artists poured out their heart and talent manifesting their love for the Virgin and their culture in murals and other art forms. Ernesto de la Loza, muralist, first became aware of the Virgin of Guadalupe because of the murals in Boyle Heights and his participation in the Chicano Moratorium. The “accidental” killing of Ruben Salazar, Mexican American journalist, at the moratorium, changed his life forever. Loza said he “took to the streets and started painting murals, and never stopped.” His mural, “Resurrection of the Green Planet,” is personal in that it recognizes his family’s great respect for his grandmother. She is center stage, a medicine woman, folk healer/*curandera* standing in the light of the Virgin of Guadalupe’s aureole. The roses that Juan Diego gathered on barren Tepeyac Hill frame the child going into the planet earth. The woman with the flowing dark hair to the left of the healer is an indigenous woman. “It is actually Malinche . . . Hiawatha . . . or Pocahantas,” Loza explained. To the left is a “great loss,” a man who could not find his way. The reclining woman to the right of the healer is holding a timeless piece, “a baptismal [font], cleansing and flowing—a purification.” The water flows downward to embrace the “mermaid who represents the newly arrived, the immigrant, the street vendor. The bucket of water she is holding brings something refreshing and new in a pure state.” Loza continued to describe the top head above the mermaid surrounded by an eternal flow of energy inside, the yin yang, the positive and negative forces. There are microscopic germs and cells, man’s hand and technology, “modern medicine combined with faith healers.” The *calaveras*, skeletons, cactus, and pottery memorialize Mexican art. The Virgin of Guadalupe instills in Loza “a sense of pride, and a conviction to seek the truth.”

“Resurrection of the Green Planet”

Ernesto de la Loza

“Where Heroes are Born”

Juan Ordúñez

Juan Ordúñez died on November 15, 1988. His four-panel mural, “Where Heroes Are Born” gives homage to the Mexican American recipients of the Medal of Honor in World War II and the Korean War. Ordúñez and two other friends painted the Virgin’s image somewhat spontaneously. Although the image is no longer there today, for eighteen years it provided a spiritual space for the community of Lincoln Heights.

Architect, Gustavo Leclerc, believes that the ever-present Virgin of Los Angeles is a religious icon creating a special language. Leclerc sees her as “an extremely important translator or connector between diverse groups . . . and how space is negotiated.” Her image, according to Leclerc, is even more powerful when people feel their cultural values are threatened, especially by the anti-immigrant sentiments prevalent today.

But devotions to the Virgin of Guadalupe are also sacred and personal. For Maricela Cuadros, her personal art piece, “*Creyendo en Milagros/Believing in Miracles*,” illuminated the darkness that overcame her at the death of her father. This experience led her to self-expression through art and evoked in her a global consciousness for humanity’s welfare.

I look at the world around me. Where are we going, what are we doing?  
Symbolically [the Virgin of Guadalupe] is there to protect us, but she is  
also there for us to probably think about those two things.

The woman in “*Creyendo en Milagros*,” center stage, is holding a world that is a little dark and becoming even darker, according to Cuadros. “If you believe and really see the essence of who we are and who she is [the Virgin of Guadalupe]. . . then miracles can happen. She’s holding [the world] because it is still possible.” The tattoo emphasizes the Virgin’s moral support in our life.

“Creyendo en Milagros”

Maricela Cuadros

And on another very personal level of devastation, a beautiful mural of the Virgin of Guadalupe provides a perpetual prayer for the Eighteenth Street Gang's deceased homeboys.

## Untitled

(Eighteenth St. Gang)

Joey Terrill's experience is uniquely different but equally personal. He is a second-generation Chicano born in Los Angeles. Terrill, a gay artist, is active on the Board of Directors of VIVA, an organization for gay and lesbian Latino artists. Terrill looked at images of the Virgin all his life, and there was always an altar in his home. One oval frame with the Virgin of Guadalupe's image belonged to his grandmother. His grandparents were very strict Catholics and his mother grew up believing that the only measure of success or happiness was to be a wife and a mother "within the Catholic Church, of course." His painting, "Mother and Son," shows his mother at that stage in her life when she had achieved "success or happiness." Tragically, triggered by a traumatic divorce, Terrill's mother had a nervous breakdown, within five years of the photograph. Terrill believes the church abandoned his mother when she needed it most. "The breakdown of my mother was the starter impetus for me to constantly challenge and question authority, structure, infrastructure, politics, politicians, the priests, and the nuns." Because Terrill believed the Church was not there for him either, he left the Church and never went back.

One of Joey Terrill's most powerful works of art must be "Mother and Son," which dominates his home as one walks in. His vibrant painting, two feet wide by four feet tall, projects a reverence for motherhood through the veneration of the Virgin of Guadalupe. "Mother and Son" is an autobiographical art piece, a transposed image of his mother and himself taken from a photograph in 1957. Terrill was two years old, and his mother was a new mother and extremely happy. Terrill describes "Mother and Son" as a "secular image of a Chicana growing up in the United States bound by and limited by the teachings of the Catholic Church, particularly the Mexican Catholic Church." The graphics surrounding the image are significant events in Terrill's life: his sister's wedding; headlines of Robert Kennedy's assassination at the Ambassador Hotel; St. Joseph, the carpenter for whom Terrill's grandfather was named; the address where Terrill painted "Mother and Son"; Mexican blankets and sarapes, and Los Angeles City Hall. Roses appear throughout the painting, his mother's favorite flowers. Terrill flashed back to his mother holding him when he was a baby, the happiest time in their life. "Mother and Son' is a homage to my mom and her suffering and what she went through. I'd like to think of it as a secular kind of saintly image."

## "Mother and Son"

Joseph Terrill

Yousef, a Christian Orthodox and citizen of Los Angeles for over 15 years, believes the Virgin Mary is the Mother of God. Mary Geris has lived in Los Angeles for 25 years and she agrees. They feel her protection, and believe she is a mother for everyone. According to Yousef Geris, “She is important everywhere, not just here in the community. . . . We saw her [in Cairo]. . . . She appeared many times above the church.” According to Yousef, a lady with cancer who attended that church was cured by the Virgin Mary. Yousef wanted special flowers on the mural on the east wall of their liquor store and Mary Geris wanted a special face, one that would make her feel the Virgin was watching over her. They decided that a portrait of the Virgin of Guadalupe would be perfect. It took over a year-and-a-half to find the right artist, Enrique Márquez, from Veracruz, Mexico. Yousef visited the mural every Sunday and put candles and incense there because, he explained, he was unable to go to church. He [saw] people go to the mural and tip their hats; others “make the sign of the cross . . . Everybody, they love it.”

Actually, Enrique Márquez thought the theme of the Virgin was marvelous even though he stated he did not believe in the Virgin of Guadalupe. The face was very challenging for him and took longer to paint than the rest of the mural. Márquez stated he felt impelled to ask about the very large flowers that Yousef and Mary wanted, and they did not want the angel or the moon, as with the traditional Virgin of Guadalupe. They wanted angels on each side of the Virgin. Márquez insisted that he was never interested in the Virgin of Guadalupe but admitted he used a small image he had of her and copied the image and the tunic onto the wall. Márquez explained further,

Once I started to paint the image, the face in particular, many things began to happen. The people in the motels, all of them felt something, an emotion that is something beyond me. I can't describe it. That's something only the people themselves can describe. Cholos would also come by, interested.

Márquez also remembered a Chinese woman, about 75 years old, who made the sign of the cross as she walked over to the mural. "An ecstasy occurred, a rapture, perhaps that's what happened to Juan Diego." The mural was destroyed during the construction of Staples Center.

Untitled

Enrique Márquez

The more one drives around Los Angeles, the more murals one discovers, such as in South Central where I saw Juan Abelar in the process of painting one. He started painting her image when he was about eleven years old so that people would stop writing on the walls. He has painted over 25 murals in the community.

“Sir Duke” (Wilbert O'Neil Bornier), also from South Central, has painted nine murals of the Virgin. Duke is originally from Louisiana and migrated with his parents to Los Angeles when he was about 5 years old. He first started to paint her image when he learned that she was the Mother of God. As I interviewed Duke about his artwork, nothing could have prepared me for his answer to my question, “When you think about her, how does she make you feel?” He answered quietly, after a long pause, “Good. She is like a mother. . . . She makes me feel like Jesus Christ.”

Although some murals are very sophisticated, some display simply a “pure” love of her presence, like the one painted by Pedro Astorga, manager of an apartment complex close to downtown Los Angeles. A few blocks from these apartments, another image caught my curiosity because of the Christmas decorations surrounding it. The owner of the store, Ismael Anguiano, (personal conversation in 1997) told me the image was retouched by a man who had learned to paint her in prison. In an interview with

Father Dennis Keaney, assigned to Folsom State Prison for 22 years, he stated he has seen tattoos with her image, and prisoners regularly request holy cards with the Virgin's image. "The Virgin of Guadalupe is a symbol of consolation, a liberator from oppression . . . This is what keeps them sane. . . The Virgin of Guadalupe is a bond to tradition and culture. She represents hope when there isn't any."

### Untitled Art and Anonymous Artists



The Virgin of Guadalupe is a stellar presence in Los Angeles. She crosses all boundaries and borders; she is inclusive, engaging and participatory—privately and politically.

In the 1980s Aurora Castillo and Juana Beatriz Gutiérrez, concerned with the environment in their community, founded Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA). They initiated an eight-year struggle to prevent a \$100 million prison from being built in their community (four hundred families participated). MELA also took on another battle against a proposed toxic waste incinerator in the city of Vernon.

Elsa López is particularly proud of the “lead awareness” campaign that affected hundreds and thousands of children and families. Over thirty schools were contacted in an effort to raise the consciousness of doctors, teachers, parents, children, and the county about lead contamination. Their efforts facilitated the passing of a law requiring mandatory lead testing in preliminary examinations for all children in the WIC program. López explained the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the marches was “considered a blessing for a safe and peaceful protest.”

Jim Jones and Johnny Garcia, through their Pico-Union Association, protested against drugs and crime in the community two years after the 1992 riots. The Virgin’s image led the march.

Education in the 1990s also brought university students together expressing their ethnic pride and the importance of Chicano Studies in the universities. Guadalupe’s image accompanied their fasts.

In the labor force, on Monday afternoon, April 11, 2000, “Janitors for Justice” strengthened their resolve to continue their fight for better wages and picketed at Arco Plaza in downtown Los Angeles. While others carried their identifying picket signs, Janitor Nester Soleno confidently carried a statue of the Virgin.

Judith F. Baca, Los Angeles muralist and founder of SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center) believes “She [Guadalupe] is a perfect icon in the sense that she references power.” And she appears on countless city streets not only in Chicano and Latino L.A., but also in the Asian, Anglo, and African American communities. It is an impossible task to give an exact or even an approximate number of murals

displaying the image of the Virgin in Los Angeles. Some have been destroyed in the process of renovation. While many murals have been destroyed, others survived chaos.

In 1992, after the “not-guilty” verdict in the Rodney King beating trial, the demographics of a community not too far from central Los Angeles changed from mainly African American to Latino. Together, the two groups created an extraordinary mural with a unique history, located on the east wall of The First African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. It is the oldest Black congregation in the city of Los Angeles, founded by an escaped slave, Biddy Mason, in 1872. But in the late 1980s, the community was in turmoil. Three gangs, the Drifters (primarily Latino) and the Bloods and Crips (primarily Black) were fighting over the east wall of the church and defacing it with graffiti on a regular basis. The church members would remove the graffiti; the gang members would put it back again. There were gang shootings and two janitors had been shot at as they were removing the graffiti.

Although the First AME Church was already involved in some forty different ministries serving the families of the community with food, counseling, and computer training, Reverend Cecil L. Murray, Senior Minister, believed art could send a great message to the people. Recognizing the positive values of the community and of the respective cultures in the community, Murray envisioned a mural that would emphasize the ideals and the contributions of the Blacks and Latinos “beyond the limitations of the negative.” Murray believed that “art [would be] the perfect medium of God” to attain this goal. He strongly believed that if the Blacks and Latinos could see themselves coming together as a community, this message would reflect the spirit of the First AME church “that welcomes and unifies all cultures.”

The church contacted Bernard Stanley Hoyes, Jamaican artist and community member. Hoyes recommended going to Los Angeles High School and Crenshaw High School to select their four best art students. He emphasized the significance of the educational aspect of the project, and the importance of the artists’ participation in every phase.

Hoyes met with the gangs, listened to what was happening and enlisted them to help with the project, and the church employed the gang members. Parents were also contacted. Hoyes assumed the responsibility for the crew's safety, and was present

before, during, and after the end of the workday. He chose the images for the mural, but the ideas of how to use the imagery came from the youth.

Although Bernard Hoyes came to know about Mary as an altar boy when he was growing up in Jamaica, he first saw the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico City the summer of his sophomore year in college. “You just couldn't go away without noticing her . . . I kind of got infected in terms of visual splendor.”

Hoyes stated he prefers painting original imagery—the “revival theme” of Jamaica, “a cross between African retention and Christianity (Catholicism, Anglicanism, or Protestantism).” This theme has brought Hoyes national and international recognition. However, Hoyes believes that some of his paintings “that have become icons unto themselves in the African American community are kind of on the verge of the Virgin of Guadalupe images—basically, with the female figure in command.”

The undertaking of this mural produced extraordinary events. The time estimate for the mural was one month, but it took four. Although Hoyes welcomed participation by young persons interested in the mural, there were many setbacks for the mural: shootings, and pink paint smearings on it. Some gang members that were painting the mural during the day were getting drunk at night and would graffiti the mural again. The gangs were also restless. Lucky, a gang leader, who was in jail, was furloughed for the weekend. He was an aspiring artist whose passion was Guadalupe. While trying to find a solution to the unrest, the police unofficially granted the young persons complete freedom to “tag” the entire rest of the wall from the end of the mural to the end of the block.

The original sketch for the mural had the Virgin of Guadalupe being carried in a procession by children, similar to a Diego Rivera painting. On seeing this, Lucky exclaimed that he wanted her image to be much, much bigger. Lucky's participation, according to Hoyes, “gave [a] kind of sacrament to the wall.” After that, there were no more problems. Hoyes added that Lucky wanted to keep his eleven-year-old brother from “gang banging.” Hoyes believes that “Until she became apparent on the mural . . . the Hispanic community didn't feel at rest with the transformation of the wall.” It is also significant that Hoyes wanted the Virgin to be seen from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, where many

gang shootings had occurred. These tragedies were challenged with the nonviolent participation of the men of the church, 150 to 200 of them, as they took back their neighborhood, walking the streets at night. "Ultimately . . . 14 rock houses [were shut down] by just refusing to let clients enter, and we began to make an impact."<sup>19</sup>

The mural, "In The Spirit of Contribution," honors the contributions of the Blacks and Latinos in this country, and the "uniting of cultures." From left to right, the man blowing an African horn represents the crossing of African heritage to the Americas. There are contemporary persons: Duke Ellington, representing the Harlem Renaissance; Paul Robeson, athlete, performing artist, and activist; Bo Jangles, dancer and entertainer; Marian Anderson, internationally renowned contralto, "representing freedom and dignity in high society"; Elijah Muhammad, contributor to a greater consciousness in the traditions of Islam, "unifying the bold strength of spirit and character of Africans in America."<sup>20</sup> The skull represents death and the preciousness of life; Tommy Smith and John Carlos at the Olympic games proclaim their ancestral pride; the Supremes, the revolutionary female trio that united the youth in America through their music and a female choir symbolizing the movement of different causes are included. The dove above the woman dressed in red with outstretched arms symbolizes the unity of spirits.

From right to left, the Virgin of Guadalupe symbolizes the spirit of contribution; also shown are Emiliano Zapata, hero of the Mexican Revolution, Benito Juarez, Mexico's great Zapotec president, Frida Kahlo, feminist painter, and excerpts from Orozco's and Siqueiros' artwork. Also visible is an ancient Mayan sacrificial altar representing the belief that "in order for life to continue, life must be given. . . . The ceremonial table with fruit represents everyone coming to the table of life with their own contribution." The mural effected reconciliation between the young people and survived the Rodney King riots in 1992.

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19 Reverend Cecil L. Murray Interview. Los Angeles, California, April 1, 1997.

20 Video, "In the Spirit of Contribution."

“In the Spirit of Contribution”

Bernard Stanley Hoyes

Photographer: Mary E. Elliott

Another community, Florence, was struck with violence from the same riots. It is home for *Florencia 13* and also Pancho's Bakery. In the 1960s, gangs would graffiti the walls of the bakery. An agreement was made to stop the graffiti if the owner would let them paint a mural of the Virgin of Guadalupe on the side wall of the bakery. The graffiti stopped. During the 1992 riots, the buildings surrounding the bakery were looted and burned. Western Auto and the Korean Electric Store never recuperated, and the lots were cleared. Jorge Cedillo, an owner of Pancho's Bakery, remembers, "If it hadn't been for her [the Virgin], our business would not have survived the riots. I feel it in my heart and soul . . ." Cedillo also believes he himself is still alive from a tour of duty in Vietnam because of the Virgin. The mural is two stories high, and Cedillo delightfully expressed that "She shines so magnificently at night!" The bakery has also survived other disasters, including the San Fernando earthquake. *Florencia 13* has contributed to the community with four other murals of the Virgin.

## Untitled

(*Florencia 13* Gang)

The largest demonstration in the history of Los Angeles was replete with her images. On October 16, 1994, some 100,000 people protested anti-immigrant Proposition 187.

Los Angeles, the city named after the Mother of God, as Queen of the Angels,<sup>21</sup> was represented by every ethnic group.

Peter Quezada, a self-taught artist, was not part of the Chicano Mural Renaissance of the late 1970s in East Los Angeles, but he came to know the Virgin of Guadalupe as a child and understands her significance in the Chicano community. “The people view her as an icon. She is the mother of Jesus Christ and in the Roman Catholic [Church] and [for] most Latinos, Jesus Christ is God.” Quezada is deeply affected by the Virgin’s religious and artistic character.

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<sup>21</sup> Los Angeles was officially named “*El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciúncula*” (“The Town of Our Lady Queen of the Angels of Porciuncula”), on September 4, 1781 in the official decree of Felipe de Neve, Spanish governor of California. Porciumcula was the name given to the Los Angeles River, referring to the Porciuncula chapel of *Santa Maria Degli Angeli*, near Assisi, Italy. St. Francis of Assisi restored this chapel in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and it later became the center of the Franciscan Order. The name “Los Angeles” was formalized when the city was incorporated on April 4, 1850.

Because of Quezada's social conscience and deep pride in his community, he has been painting murals in Echo Park, Silver Lake, Lincoln Heights, El Sereno and on the walls of the Arroyo Seco tributary that feeds into the Los Angeles River. Besides his sensitivity to the sacred, his murals project his receptiveness to humor, education, peace in the community, and positive social behavior. Some of his many themes include skulls, such as the zig-zag man or death from the Grateful Dead album cover; Warner Brothers' Yosemite Sam; images of Betty Boop; cuddly white bears; zoot-suiters and pachucos; the character of the joker encouraging students to stay in school or to "have the courage to say no to gangs."

Acknowledging the risk of painting on public or privately owned property, Quezada accepts "the probability of [his mural] piece being hit up. Every time you do a mural you are really just rolling the dice that it will be accepted by the people in the area." However, according to Sojin Kim, "Quezada's work has had remarkable longevity . . . Few pieces exhibit much graffiti."

Quezada moved to Highland Park (northeast Los Angeles) in 1976 and befriended many gang members of different affiliations in the numbered avenues. He welcomes taggers and gang graffiti writers to participate in his multi-themed murals to discourage them from participating in antisocial behavior. According to Quezada, the graffiti-covered walls he chooses are "for the most part no-man's retaining-walls on abandoned property. [They] have been hit up by graffiti for a long period of time." After working for ten years at Security Pacific Bank, Quezada left the bank and started a full-time position with community Youth Gang Services (CYGS), one of the nation's largest anti-gang agencies. When funding stopped, Quezada continued counseling against gang violence and graffiti on his own time. "He has earned a certain amount of renown and respect," according to Sojin Kim, author of *Chicano Graffiti and Murals: The Neighborhood Art of Peter Quezada*. It is not uncommon for newspaper reporters and residents of Echo Park to refer to Quezada as "the graffiti warrior," among other accolades. Yet, a neighborhood police forum concerning gang problems characterized some of his murals in the context of gang promotion. However, Quezada abhors violence and graffiti and explicitly avoids reference to any gang. The only time Quezada uses gang names or taggers' nicknames in the "roll call" or "honor roll" is when he does not know them by any other name or if they have died. The "honor roll/roll call"

acknowledges their assistance in painting the mural. Several young people assisted Quezada's non-traditional mural of the Virgin of Guadalupe on Maycrest and Huntington Drive in El Sereno. The mural has remained graffiti-free for many years, but it was not effortless.

Roberto Esparza, a mechanic shop owner, asked Quezada to paint her image on the outside wall of the family's store where a shooting had occurred. It was a heavily-graffitied gangster area across the street from his shop. Quezada was reluctant to accept the commission because in the past he had refused to paint her image because some people, according to Quezada, "hide behind her," or because of graffiti or gang problems. "I've done fewer Virgin Marys than I could have simply because I won't do her so people can hide behind her. I have more respect than that." Yet Quezada agreed to paint her "for the neighborhood kids." And he invited gang members to participate. Quezada remembered, "They would come around when I was wrapping things up [or] when I was measuring, and I knew them. But they didn't participate on this one." The mural project became a major undertaking for Quezada. It was vandalized on three different occasions. First with a weak black spray can. The second time, they threw a bucket of paint over it, and the third time, a second bucket of paint was strewn all over the image. Each time Quezada "cleaned it up and repainted it, starting from scratch." Quezada speculates the culprit was making an anti-religious statement, perhaps related to fundamentalist Christians who "regard Catholic reverence for the Virgin Mary as a threat to the primacy of Christ."

## Untitled

Peter Quezada



Quezada believes the survival of the mural came down to a show of “will power. Who had the more will, the person that was doing the vandalism or the person that was cleaning it up? It really did a lot of good for the community. These kids are now in their late teens. They remember it, and they can look at it, and they can still say they had a hand in it because they did.” On the other hand, Esparza believes the image has served as a truce for the many gang problems because of the poem that he asked Quezada to inscribe on it, *Si Tienes Penas O Problemas, Yo Te Los Resolvere.* /If you Have Problems Or Miseries, I shall Resolve Them.” And it also changed the awareness of the community. After the mural was completed, Esparza explained, “sometimes we put flowers out there for her, and some people steal the flower vases, and they steal the flowers—but they regret it—and they return them.” Esparza added, “Her image is one of the most venerated images throughout the world.”

Julio Martínez, a Central American immigrant came to the United States at age 10. He first lived in Hollywood where he became interested in photography at age 13. About a year later Martínez became interested in art and moved to East Los Angeles and became an ardent student at Self Help Graphics. Never having seen an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Guatemala, Martínez was intrigued with the murals of East Los Angeles that were just about in “every other building,” and the interpretations vary. Martínez continued,

The murals in the outlying communities are more like ‘commercialized icons’. . . whereas in East Los Angeles they are a more ‘personal act.’ In East L.A. anybody can paint a mural of the Virgin. You don’t have to be a professional artist. They do it because they love her and they identify with her in a certain way that they feel the faith of their community. Most everyone here has something to identify with each other, which is the Virgin.

As a “thank you” to the community of East L.A. and Self Help Graphics for helping him succeed as an artist and community member, and a desire to bless the community with her protection, Martínez painted his own version of the Virgin of

Guadalupe. Martínez painted only the face of the Virgin, ascending. “I didn’t know how the people were going to react [because] the Virgin is coming from the earth because she comes from the earth. Most everything that you see has grown out of the earth. If it lands here, that’s a different story.”

Untitled

Julio Martínez

In 1993, the community of City Terrace in East Los Angeles under the leadership of muralist George Yepes gathered to honor the Virgin. Having grown up in City Terrace, Yepes was selected to paint the Virgin of Guadalupe for the upcoming procession on December 12<sup>th</sup>. With the riots, all the killings, and everything that had just happened in the city, Yepes did not feel like doing the traditional Virgin of Guadalupe. Instead, he envisioned the Virgin of Guadalupe as the *Pietá*. Yepes thought, “Instead of the murdered Christ, it is the murdered youth from the streets. That is the image, that’s what should lead the procession of the *Virgen de Guadalupe*.”

He started painting his vision of the Virgin, five days straight, sleeping on and off. He described the image to Father Rumi of St. Lucy’s Church and Yepes said, “I don’t know if [the image is] sacrilegious.” Father Rumi replied, “You’re right on . . . This is it. We are the body of Christ, and to kill each other, that is the unsacred.”

This image was posted on twelve billboards in different gang areas in the city with these words, “For the Love of Our Raza, Stop the Killings!”

(Billboard)

Photographer: Gus Frias

It was displayed over the interior side altar of St. Lucy's. Shortly afterwards Yepes painted two images of the Virgin of Guadalupe on the exterior doors of St. Lucy's Church. Although this mural is abundant with Catholic symbols, it reflects

considerable communal pride, with great emphasis on the City of Los Angeles. A banner in the center of it waves between the two Virgins with yet another title for Mary, "*Madre de los Desamparados*" (Mother of the Forsaken). The words were added after this photograph was taken. Traditionally, the Virgin of Guadalupe has always been on the side of the disadvantaged, and she is agonizing over the death of the crucified gang member. The second Virgin of Guadalupe, known as the Nativity, is holding a brand new baby surrounded with love and peace. George Yepes emphasized, ". . . what every baby should be born with."

The dichotomies of the spiritual and the savage, good and evil, the personal and the political are depicted. At the very top is the Holy Spirit. It represents enlightenment shining on everybody, but the light is blocked by tormenting clouds. There are two little angel-like figures, but only one has definite wings. Yepes explained, "It could be [a] man, but they are together, mixed up in these tormented clouds." The two figures are holding a banner and touching the Crown of Thorns, and the Sacred Heart is in the center of a cross. Roses are brilliant, and as intense as the violence depicted. There is gentleness and there is savagery. A tender newborn in a rose bud, a vision of hope.

On the left side of the Virgin, women are praying for the lost sons of the barrios. "One of them is completely overwhelmed and one is really in devout prayer." A couple is praying. St. Lucy, martyred by having her eyes gouged out, is crying with the women because of the death of their sons. The dying gang member is wrapped in the red mantle of violent martyrdom. The hands of God are coming down from the roof on both sides of the panels. Christ's fingers are caressing the shoulders of one of the young men.

On the right side, God's hand is nudging the back of the Pope. The Pope has a cloak with the image of the *Pietá*. Christ is telling the Pope "Do something . . . Show the way . . . You are the connection between them and me." Next to the head of a baby is the head of a lion, muzzled and restrained because he is seconds away from pouncing on the child. A "tri-figure" personifies the ties of the political with the spiritual. Two angels are sharing the same wing span. One angel is the City of Los Angeles, and the center angel is *Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles*.

Among these symbols of the political and spiritual, there is a little guardian angel hovering over a small boy. The boy is draped in a rose and he is holding a new declaration, not the Tepeyac of Mexico, rather “*El Tepeyac de Los Angeles*”—an urban image.

“Pieta”

George Yepes

*“El Tepeyac de Los Angeles”*

George Yepes

Photographer: George Rodriguez

If one were to describe a sense of community and commitment, spirituality and empowerment in gender form, Judith F. Baca would reflect just that. Baca has been the mediatrix for change with young people, politicians, and the community through visual arts in Los Angeles. Baca has integrated and created relationships between people in conflict. She is especially interested in teenagers: "I believe that they have a future, that they are the gauge of what the society is doing or not doing. . . . They are the barometer of racism."<sup>22</sup> Baca's vision is all-encompassing, and she mobilizes all ethnic groups. She educates herself and her participants with cultural experts, research and inclusion of all minds, backgrounds, and ages. Baca's community artwork has produced harmony in their interrelationships and in the murals. Baca acts out her beliefs through public art.

Baca's mother's pioneering spirit and her grandmother's nurturance influenced her keen sensitivity to oppression and resistance. According to Baca, her grandmother gave her "a tremendous spiritual force. I think she became the ideal of what love should be." Baca was the first woman in her family to graduate from college. On graduation night she showed her artwork to her grandmother. Her grandmother asked, "What is it for?" Baca's vibrant mind was stirred into defining what her art should be about.

Her question really guided me from that point on. I knew I had to use this particular skill I had, but, that it had to be connected with something that had meaning or purpose beyond my self-gratification and could speak

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22 Social and Public Art Resource Center, *Signs From the Heart: California Chicano Murals* (Singapore: SPARC, 1990) p. 79.

to the people I cared most about, my family and community.

Los Angeles is home to more peoples and languages, some 200, than any other place in the world, and “Baca has devoted her career to making these multiple cultures public and visible”<sup>23</sup> in the Los Angeles community.

Recognizing her proud heritage, she also recognizes other people’s heritage and contributions. Baca graduated from California State University at Northridge, and started teaching at Alemany High School in Los Angeles, her alma mater. Baca worked with students from different neighborhoods. For her first mural project, she organized a team of 20 young people from four different neighborhoods while confronting differences and establishing a common set of goals. In 1974, she proposed a citywide mural program to the Los Angeles City Council. This project produced some 250 murals in 10 years with Anglo, Asian, Black, and Chicano artists participating. Her interest in the forgotten ones has focused the attention of people who see the “Great Wall of Los Angeles” at the Tujunga Wash Flood Control Channel. She wanted this narrative mural to acknowledge the existence of ethnic pride in the California community. Two hundred fifteen young people were recruited, between the ages of 14 and 21, from varied ethnic backgrounds, including rival gang members. They received art instruction, attended lectures from historians, and learned to work together. One “Mural Maker,” Todd Ableser, stated, “I left with a sense of who I was and what I could do that was unlike anything I’d ever felt before.”<sup>24</sup> The “Great Wall’s” history took many summers to complete.

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23 Frances Pohl, “Judith F. Baca: Sites and Insights, 1974-1992,” (Montgomery Gallery, March 7 – April 4,) Pomona College, Claremont, California, 1993.

24 Erika Doss, *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995) p.179.

The Santa Barbara Arts Commission and the Santa Barbara County Parks Department then approached Baca to paint a series of murals in Guadalupe, California, a small rural town of some 6,000 inhabitants, located in north Santa Barbara County. It was named after the Virgin of Guadalupe and was called Rancho Guadalupe. This 32,408 acre Mexican land grant was given to Teodoro Arellanes and Don Diego Olivera in 1840. They introduced cattle to the region. Eventually the ranch was sold to Theodore LeRoy, a French trader who later founded the town of Guadalupe.

By 1897, Japanese farmers dominated the agriculture business and in the 1940s comprised over 51% of the population in Guadalupe, but in 1942 most of the Japanese were interned in Manzanar and Topaz during World War II. This created a labor shortage and in 1942-1964 the Bracero Program brought Mexican migrants into the fields and packing sheds.

In 1923, the *Comité Cívico Mexicano de Guadalupe*, a citizen's non-profit group, focused on promoting Mexican American traditions such as *Quinceañeras*; Sunday *Tardeadas* with music and food booths; *Fiesta Patrias*, commemorating Mexican Independence Day; a park and community center; a recreational place for the children; and a mural about Guadalupe's history and contributions of the Chumash Indians, the Chinese, Japanese, Chileans, English, Italians, Peruvians, Portuguese, Scotch, Swiss, Filipinos, and Mexicans.

By 1980, the Mexican population in Guadalupe changed from 18.6% to 75% and eventually to 83% in the 1990s.

Even though Santa Barbara County was one of the richest county in the nation in the 1980s, the City of Santa Barbara also had an increasing homeless population. The denial of their voting rights sparked marches to the Reagan ranch and an appeal to the United States Supreme Court. In 1988, farmworkers struggled to survive earning \$1,000 less than the federal poverty level of \$13,416, even though Guadalupe's main subsistence was agriculture, and the farmworkers were underemployed and overworked. There was also a longing for redress and acknowledgment of the Community of Guadalupe through public art.

Baca moved to Guadalupe and lived there for several months at the Druid Temple on Main St. She saw the circumstances of the people living there and enabled them to

express their “real” situation. Everyone was welcomed: public officials; civil rights activists; migrant workers; teenagers with their scrapbooks and school yearbooks. Family albums, historical data, and conversations in town meetings were also included. A mural about Guadalupe’s history became a high priority and their dreams: uncontaminated water; a playing field for the children’s recreation; decent housing and good schools. And more: day care and accessible medical care; non-toxic pesticides, and preservation of their cultures. Baca’s Guadalupe Mural encompasses all of their wishes in four panels.

The third panel, “Pickers,” emphasizes the farmworkers in the fields.

I want[ed] to convey the beauty of the farmworkers . . . while at the same time [revealing] the harsh conditions that this surface beauty belies—the low wages, health problems, and substandard living conditions.<sup>25</sup>

Guadalupe's agribusiness is plentiful: cauliflower, celery, artichokes, and broccoli. The harvest crews are cutting, bagging, packing, and loading the vegetables. Above the imposing acres, Baca painted crates with labels depicting a typical work day. You can also see a mother working with her baby on her back; toxic pesticides; and the back-breaking stoop labor. On the lower right corner, the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is on a farmworker’s scarf. According to Baca, “This scarf could distinguish them as being from Guadalupe and perhaps even develop a small industry for the people. . . . They could silkscreen those scarves, and they could end up being more economically independent of growers who are exploiting them.”

## “Pickers”

Judith F. Baca

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<sup>25</sup>Frances Pohl, *Judith F. Baca: Sites and Insights, 1974-1992*.

(Courtesy of Social and Public Art Resource Center, Guadalupe Mural, Panel 3)

The fourth panel, “The Future of Guadalupe,” represents the unrelenting dream of the Guadalupans. Baca transformed their dream into art. It’s not clear if the time of day is dawn or dusk, but the dream for the future of Guadalupe is eminent. A female angel welcomes you and offers the universal gifts that everyone desires for their children and communities. Unpolluted water as God gave it to us. Her transparent wings are enhanced with visions of a planned community; recreation and available doctors; a child happily playing soccer; decent housing and good schools to prepare for life.



“The Future of Guadalupe”

Judith F. Baca

(Courtesy of Social and Public Art Resource Center, Guadalupe Mural, Panel 4)

The presence of the Virgin's image can also be one of the greatest compliments possible. With the death of Bert Corona, January 15, 2001, among the highest tributes to his 60 years of human rights activism was a procession entering into St. Vincent's Roman Catholic Church for a Requiem Mass, led by the Virgin of Guadalupe's standard. Mr. Corona, a Protestant, fought for Mexican and Latino immigrants and all workers of the United States. He founded *Hermandad Mexicana Nacional* in Los Angeles whose membership grew to over 80,000 families with chapters in California, New York, Illinois, and Washington, DC. Eventually, Corona's efforts

contributed to the Amnesty provision in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

Northwest of downtown Los Angeles, young people again honored Chávez and the farmworkers, publicly, in the city of San Fernando. San Fernando has the unique distinction of being the first city in the nation to designate March 31st a legal holiday in memory of their hero. At first, some members of the community wanted to rename Kalisher St. “César Chávez,” but the city council voted against the change. However, high school students persisted in commemorating Chávez, their hero. These young community leaders were members of the San Fernando/Sylmar Youth League. Ronnie Campa, one of those leaders, recommended a mural, and the youth league contacted artist Lalo García. He suggested a mural about “the life of César.” Teenagers assisted in the project.

The mural’s timeline begins with the fledgling farmworkers’ movement (UFW) depicted in scenes of their struggle. Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the movement, is marching with Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, and young and older activists. Picket signs state their high-spirited consciousness: “*Si se puede.*” (Yes, it can be done.) The words “Non-Violence” crown the UFW’s renowned logo, the black eagle. Below their anthem, *De Colores*, the story of their struggle develops: the stoop labor; the sheriff beating demonstrators; the deadly pesticides permeating the vegetables, fruits, and the people who harvest them. An invisible farmworker is holding a crate of vegetables. Lalo García underscored that,

He represents the struggle out of the fields and into the supermarkets. . . .  
 . The farmworker is telling us, ‘pick the best fruits, I pick the best vegetables, I give you my best, and all I ask of you is to give me a little bit of your support. I feed your family; you feed mine.’

García left the farmworker invisible because we ignore him.

The overriding theme of the mural is César Chávez’s character: his valiant belief in non-violence; his advocacy for human rights; his concern for social and economic justice; and his triumphant faith in the Virgin of Guadalupe’s presence in his movement. It was also well known among the farmworkers that Chávez was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy of non-violence and by St. Francis of Assisi. Garcia described the mural and the two men and the Virgin supporting César

Chávez during his fasts. García affirmed, “Without Gandhi, St. Francis of Assisi, and the Virgin, he just couldn’t have done it . . . You have to have faith in order to go through something like this.”

# Untitled

Lalo García

Photographer: Mary E. Elliott

(Partial Mural)

Lalo García firmly believes that Chávez's "strongest individual commitment" to the farmworkers' movement was his fasting.

Next to the Virgin, Chávez is holding the Bill of Rights for the Farmworker. "That was something that he accomplished in his lifetime, very well," said García, "but a movement of this magnitude cannot be accomplished in one lifetime." García depicts Chávez holding on to two young adults, passing on his spiritual energy for the continuing struggle ahead: for political and economic power; an end to discrimination; a secure education; citizenship; voter registration and health programs. The young person's picket sign affirms "*La Causa* shall continue." At the completion of "The Life of César," 17-year old Roger Ponce commented, "Instead of going out there and tagging walls, we took this plain old white wall and now it is full of soul." ("San Fernando Wall Painting Inspires Youths." Los Angeles Times, March 31, 1995)

Lalo García's personal artwork expresses his tremendous love and pride in his Mexican heritage and culture. Every painting reflects the customs and people of his

country of origin. And every painting includes an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, unobtrusively yet integrally. García passionately regards the Virgin of Guadalupe as the highest expression of his Mexicanness. “She was the image that brought the Aztecs, who were dying at the time [of the Conquest], back to life.”

Lalo García and his parents were born in a little pueblo, “*La Cieneguita*” (Little Swamp) in Michoacan, Mexico. It is still possible to hear little children in the plaza speaking Tarascan. Although he keeps the memory of his heritage alive, teaching through art and dance, he values Los Angeles greatly. “The Virgin is important for Los Angeles and the whole world because of what she has done in the Americas. [Her image] is a very true example of what an image can do [for a] people.” On a very personal level, Lalo García believes the Virgin’s presence in his life has empowered his very being.

I, author of this website, have personally seen every image on this site, however, many have been destroyed since I began my research in the 1990s. They are in the north, south, west, and east of Los Angeles. But the stories about Guadalupe were a gift from my *familia*, stories that I never heard from anybody else as I was growing up in a non-Mexican neighborhood on Adams and Main Street. And the first immigrants that I ever met were my parents, Marina and Fernando. I didn’t think of them as immigrants, just Mom and Dad. My father came to this country without knowing English, but he learned, and he put himself through medical school. My mother also came without knowing English, and she also learned to speak English. However, she had to drop out of school in order to help support her family. When Marina and Fernando married, together, they were able to provide a home for 25 cousins, coming and going, sometimes staying. Marina and Fernando’s loyalty to this country personifies nobility, and belies the ordinary concept of “immigrants.” They gave and shared everything they had to help others. Marina and Fernando typify the thousands of Mexican men and women of urban and rural Southern California of yesterday and today, who carry Our Lady of Guadalupe in their hearts and minds.

The Los Angeles phenomenon—the unstoppable fascination with the Virgin of Guadalupe in art and political activism—will continue. Every time a mural is created,

it is an affirmation of the importance of culture and tradition. It also acknowledges that our ancestors' stories continue to nurture our beings.

Every time a mural is demolished, a new one is created, as sure as flowers continue to blossom in the California desert. Guadalupe is a heralded hero, and in the City of Angels named after the Mother of God, the Virgin of Guadalupe represents an irrepressible Los Angeles Mexican immigrant legacy.

## Marina and Fernando

1934

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# (Story of the First Miracle of the Americas)

## NICAN MOPOHUA

By Don Antonio Valeriano, c. 1548

Translated from the Spanish Version

of the Rev. Mario Rojas Sánchez, 1978

by Janet Barber, IHM, Ph.D.

with Reference to the Nahuatl.

Here is told and set down in order how a short time ago the Perfect Virgin Holy Mary Mother of God, our Queen, miraculously appeared out at Tepeyac, widely known as Guadalupe.

First she caused herself to be seen by an Indian named Juan Diego, poor but worthy of respect; and then her Precious Image appeared before the recently named Bishop, Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga.

1 Ten years after the City of Mexico was conquered, with the arrows and shields put aside, when there was peace in all the towns,

2 just as it sprouted, faith now grows green, now opens its corolla, the knowledge of the One by whom we all live: the true God.

3 At that time, the year 1531, a few days into the month of December, it happened that there was a humble but respected Indian, a poor man of the people;

4 his name was Juan Diego: he lived in Cuauhtitlan, as they say,

5 and in all the things of God, he belonged to Tlatilolco.

6 It was Saturday, not yet dawn: he was coming in pursuit of God and his commandments.

7 And as he drew near the little hill called Tepeyac it was beginning to dawn.

8 He heard singing on the little hill, like the song of many precious birds; when their voices would stop, it was as if the hill was answering them; extremely soft and delightful, their songs exceeded the songs of the coyoltol and the tzinitzcan and other precious birds.

9 Juan Diego stopped to look. He said to himself: "By any chance am I worthy, have I deserved what I hear? Perhaps I am only dreaming it? Perhaps I'm only dozing?"

10 Where am I? Where do I find myself? Is it possible that I am in the place our ancient ancestors, our grandparents, told about, in the land of flowers, in the land of corn, of our flesh, of our sustenance, possibly in the land of heaven?"

11 He was looking up toward the top of the hill, toward the direction the sun rises from, toward where the precious heavenly song was coming from.

12 And when the singing suddenly stopped, when it could no longer be heard, he heard someone calling him from the top of the hill; someone was saying to him: "JUAN, DEAREST JUAN DIEGO."

13 Then he dared to go to where the voice was coming from; his heart was not disturbed and he felt no agitation, rather he felt extremely happy and contented; he started to climb to the top of the little hill to go see where they were calling him from.

14 And when he reached the top of the hill, when a Maiden who was standing there saw him,

15 she called to him to come close to her.

16           And when he reached where she was, he was filled with admiration for the  
way her perfect grandeur exceeded all imagination:

17           her clothing was shining like the sun, as if it were sending out waves of light,

18           and the stone, the crag on which she stood, seemed to be giving out rays;

19           her radiance was like precious stones, it seemed like an exquisite bracelet (it  
seemed beautiful beyond anything else);

20           the earth seemed to shine with the brilliance of a rainbow in the mist.

21           And the mesquites and nopals and the other little plants that are generally up  
there seemed like emeralds. Their leaves seemed like turquoise. And their trunks, their  
thorns, their prickles, were shining like gold.

22           He prostrated himself in her presence. He listened to her breath [her voice],  
her words, which give great, great glory, which were extremely kind, as if from  
someone who was drawing him toward her and esteemed him highly.

23           She said to him, "*LISTEN. MY DEAREST AND YOUNGEST SON, JUAN. WHERE  
ARE YOU GOING?*"

24           And he answered her: "My Lady, my Queen, my Little Girl, I am going as far as  
your little house in Mexico-Tlatilolco, to follow the things of God that are given to us,  
that are taught to us by the ones who are the images of Our Lord: our priests."

25           Then she talks with him, she reveals her precious will;

26           She says to him: "*KNOW, KNOW FOR SURE, MY DEAREST AND YOUNGEST  
SON, THAT I AM THE PERFECT EVER VIRGIN HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF THE ONE  
GREAT GOD OF TRUTH WHO GIVES US LIFE, THE CREATOR OF PEOPLE, THE OWNER  
AND LORD OF WHAT IS AROUND US AND WHAT IS VERY CLOSE TO US, THE OWNER  
AND LORD OF THE SKY, THE OWNER AND LORD OF THE EARTH. I WANT VERY  
MUCH, I DESIRE VERY, VERY MUCH THAT THEY BUILD MY SACRED LITTLE HOUSE  
HERE*"

27 *IN WHICH I WILL SHOW HIM, I WILL EXALT HIM ON MAKING HIM MANIFEST:*

28 *I WILL GIVE HIM TO THE PEOPLE IN ALL MY PERSONAL LOVE, IN MY  
COMPASSIONATE GAZE, IN MY HELP, IN MY SALVATION:*

29 *BECAUSE I AM TRULY YOUR COMPASSIONATE MOTHER,*

30 *YOURS AND OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE TOGETHER IN THIS LAND,*

31 *AND OF ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT ANCESTRIES, MY LOVERS,  
THOSE WHO CRY TO ME, THOSE WHO SEEK ME, THOSE WHO TRUST IN ME,*

32 *BECAUSE THERE I WILL LISTEN TO THEIR WEEPING, THEIR SADNESS, TO  
REMEDY, TO CLEANSE AND NURSE ALL THEIR DIFFERENT TROUBLES, THEIR  
MISERIES, THEIR SUFFERING.*

33 *AND TO BRING ABOUT WHAT MY COMPASSIONATE AND MERCIFUL GAZE IS  
TRYING TO DO, GO TO THE RESIDENCE OF THE BISHOP OF MEXICO, AND YOU WILL  
TELL HIM HOW I AM SENDING YOU, SO THAT YOU MAY REVEAL TO HIM THAT I VERY  
MUCH WANT HIM TO BUILD ME A HOUSE HERE, TO ERECT MY TEMPLE FOR ME ON  
THE PLAIN; YOU WILL TELL HIM EVERYTHING, ALL THAT YOU HAVE SEEN AND  
MARVELED AT, AND WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD.*

34 *AND KNOW FOR SURE THAT I WILL APPRECIATE IT VERY MUCH AND  
REWARD IT,*

35 *THAT BECAUSE OF IT I WILL ENRICH YOU, I WILL GLORIFY YOU;*

36 *AND BECAUSE OF IT YOU WILL DESERVE VERY MUCH THE WAY THAT I  
REWARD YOUR FATIGUE, YOUR SERVICE IN GOING TO REQUEST THE MATTER THAT  
I AM SENDING YOU FOR.*

37 *NOW, MY DEAREST SON, YOU HAVE HEARD MY BREATH, MY WORD; GO, DO  
WHAT YOUR SHARE IS IN THIS."*

38           And immediately he prostrated himself in her presence; he said to her: “My Lady, my Little Girl, now I am going to make your venerable breath, your venerable word, a reality; I, your poor Indian, am leaving you for awhile.”

39           Then he came down to put her errand into action: he came to get onto the causeway, he comes straight to Mexico City.

40           When he reached the center of the city, he went straight to the residence of the Bishop, the Governing Priest, who had just recently arrived; his name was Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga, a Franciscan Priest.

41           And as soon as he got there, he then tries to see him, he begs his servants, his helpers, to go and tell him he needs to see him;

42           after a long time, when the Reverend Bishop ordered that he enter, they came to call him.

43           And as soon as he entered, first he knelt before him, he prostrated himself, then he reveals to him, he tells him the precious breath, the precious word of the Queen of Heaven, her message, and he also tells him everything that made him marvel, what he saw, what he heard.

44           And having heard his whole story, his message, as if he didn't particularly believe it to be true,

45           he answered him, he said to him: “My son, you will come again. I will still hear you calmly, I will look at it carefully from the very beginning, I will consider the reason why you have come, your will, your desire.”

46           He left: he came out sad, because the errand entrusted to him was not immediately accepted.

47           Then he returned, at the end of the day, then he came straight from there to the top of the little hill,

48           and he had the joy of meeting the Queen of Heaven: there exactly where she had appeared to him the first time, she was waiting for him.

49           And as soon as he saw her, he prostrated himself before her, he threw himself to the ground, he said to her:

50           “My dear little Mistress, Lady, Queen, my littlest Daughter, my dear little Girl, I did go to where you sent me to carry out your dear breath, your dear word; although I entered with difficulty to where the place is of the Governing Priest, I saw him, I put your breath, your word, before him, as you ordered me to.

51           He received me kindly and he listened to it perfectly, but from the way he answered me, it’s as if he didn’t understand it, he doesn’t think it’s true.

52           He said to me: ‘You will come again; I will still listen to you calmly, I will give careful attention to what you have come for, from the very beginning, to your desire, your will.’

53           The way he answered me, I could clearly see that he thinks your house that you want them to build for you here, maybe I’m only making it up, or that maybe it is not from your lips;

54           I beg you, my Lady, Queen, my Little Girl, to have one of the nobles who are held in esteem, one who is known, respected, honored, (have him) carry, take your dear breath, your dear word, so that he will be believed.

55           Because I am really (just) a man from the country, I am a [porter’s] rope band, I am a backframe, a tail, a wing, a man of no importance; I myself need to be led, carried on someone’s back, where you are sending me to is a place that I’m not used to going to or spending any time in, my Little Virgin, my Youngest Daughter, my Lady, my Little Girl;

56           please excuse me: I will grieve your face, your heart; I will fall into your anger, into your displeasure, my Lady, my Mistress.”

57           The Perfect Virgin, worthy of honor and veneration, answered him:

58           *“LISTEN, MY YOUNGEST AND DEAREST SON, KNOW FOR SURE THAT I HAVE NO LACK OF SERVANTS, OF MESSENGERS, TO WHOM I CAN GIVE THE TASK OF CARRYING MY BREATH, MY WORD, SO THAT THEY CARRY OUT MY WILL;*

59           *BUT IT IS VERY NECESSARY THAT YOU, PERSONALLY, GO AND PLEAD, THAT MY WISH, MY WILL, BECOME A REALITY, BE CARRIED OUT THROUGH YOUR INTERCESSION.*

60           *AND I BEG YOU, MY YOUNGEST AND DEAREST SON, AND I ORDER YOU STRICTLY, TO GO AGAIN TOMORROW TO SEE THE BISHOP.*

61           *AND IN MY NAME MAKE HIM KNOW, MAKE HIM HEAR MY WISH, MY WILL, SO THAT HE WILL BRING INTO BEING, HE WILL BUILD MY HOUSE OF GOD THAT I AM ASKING HIM FOR.*

62           *AND CAREFULLY TELL HIM AGAIN HOW I, PERSONALLY, THE EVER VIRGIN HOLY MARY, I, WHO AM THE MOTHER OF GOD, AM SENDING YOU.”*

63           For his part, Juan Diego responded to her and said to her: “My Lady, Queen, my Little Girl, let me not give you anguish, let me not grieve your face, your heart; I will most gladly go to carry out your breath, your word; I will absolutely not fail to do it, nor do I think the road is painful.

64           I will go and carry out your will, but perhaps I won’t be heard, and if I am heard perhaps I won’t be believed.

65           Tomorrow afternoon, when the sun goes down, I will come to return to your word, to your breath, what the Governing Priest answers to me.

66           Now I respectfully say goodbye to you, my youngest Daughter, young Girl, Lady, my Little Girl, rest a little more.”

67           And then he went to his house to rest.

68           On the following day, Sunday, while it was still night, everything was still dark, he left there, he left his house, he came straight to Tlatilolco, he came to learn what pertains to God and to be counted in roll call; then to see the Reverend Bishop.

69           And around ten o'clock everything had been taken care of: Mass was over and  
roll had been called and the crowd had gone away.

70           And Juan Diego then went to the Reverend Bishop's large house.

71           And as soon as he arrived he went through the whole struggle to see him, and  
after much effort he saw him again;

72           he knelt at his feet, he wept, he became sad as he spoke to him, as he  
revealed to him the word, the breath of the Queen of Heaven,

73           that would to God the errand, the will, of the Perfect Virgin would be believed,  
of making for her, of building her sacred little house for her, where she had said,  
where she wanted it.

74           And the Governing Bishop asked him many, many things, pursued many,  
many questions with him, to make certain of where he had seen her, what she was  
like; he told absolutely everything to the Señor Bishop.

75           And although he told him absolutely everything, and he saw and marveled  
that it appeared in everything with absolute clarity that she was the Perfect Virgin, the  
Kind and Wondrous Mother of Our Savior, Our Lord Jesus Christ,

76           nevertheless, it still didn't happen [his message was still not believed].

77           He said that not simply because of his word would his petition be carried out,  
would what he asked for happen,

78           that some other sign was very necessary if he was to believe how the Queen of  
Heaven in person was sending him.

79           As soon as Juan Diego heard that, he said to the Bishop:

80           “Lord Governor, think about what the sign you ask for will be, because then I will go to ask for it of the Queen of Heaven who sent me.”

81           And when the Bishop saw that he was in agreement, that he did not hesitate or doubt in the slightest, he dismisses him.

82           And as soon as he is on his way, he orders some of his household staff in whom he had absolute trust to follow him, to observe carefully where he was going, whom he was seeing, with whom he was speaking.

83           And that’s what they did. And Juan Diego came directly. He took the causeway.

84           And those who were following him lost him on the wooden bridge, where the brook comes out near Tepeyac. And even though they searched all over for him, they couldn’t find him anywhere.

85           And so they turned back. He made them angry, not just because the matter had greatly inconvenienced them, but also because he had frustrated their attempt.

86           So they went to tell the Señor Bishop, they put into his head that he shouldn’t believe him, they told him how he was only telling him lies, that he was only making up what he came to tell him, or that he was only dreaming or imagining what he was telling him, what he was asking of him.

87           Therefore they decided that if he came again, if he returned, they would grab him right there and would punish him severely, so that he would never come again to tell lies or get the people all excited.

88           *Meanwhile, Juan Diego was with the Most Holy Virgin, telling her the response that he was bringing from the Señor Bishop;*

89           *when she had heard it, she said to him:*

90           “*THAT’S FINE, MY YOUNGEST AND DEAREST SON, YOU WILL COME BACK HERE TOMORROW SO THAT YOU MAY TAKE THE BISHOP THE SIGN HE HAS ASKED YOU FOR;*

91            *WITH THIS HE WILL BELIEVE YOU, AND HE WILL NO LONGER HAVE ANY  
DOUBTS ABOUT ALL THIS AND HE WILL NO LONGER BE SUSPICIOUS OF YOU;*

92            *AND KNOW, MY DEAREST SON, THAT I WILL REWARD YOUR CARE AND THE  
WORK AND FATIGUE THAT YOU HAVE PUT INTO THIS FOR ME.*

93            *SO, GO NOW; I WILL BE WAITING HERE FOR YOU TOMORROW.”*

94            And on the following day, Monday, when Juan Diego was to take some sign in order to be believed, he did not return.

95            Because when he arrived at his house, the sickness had struck an uncle of his, named Juan Bernardino, and he was very ill.

96            He went to get the native healer, who treated him, but it was too late; he was very ill.

97            And when night came, his uncle begged him to come to Tlatilolco shortly after midnight, while it was still dark, to call some priest to go to confess him, to go to get him ready,

98            because he was sure that it was now the the time, now the place for him to die, because he would no longer get up, he would no longer get well.

99            And on Tuesday, while it was still night, Juan Diego left his house to come to Tlatilolco to get the priest,

100           and when he finally reached the little hill which ended the mountain range, at its foot, where the road comes out, on the side that the sun sets on, where he always passed before, he said:

101           “If I go ahead on the road, I don’t want this Lady to see me, because for sure, just like before, she’ll stop me so I can take the sign to the church governor for her, as she ordered me to;

- 102 because first our tribulation must leave us; first I must quickly call the Franciscan priest; my uncle is anxiously waiting for him.”
- 103 He immediately turned toward the hill, climbed up across it where there is a pass, and emerged on the eastern side, so that he could quickly go to Mexico, so that the Queen of Heaven would not detain him.
- 104 He thinks that where he made the turn, the one who is looking everywhere perfectly won't be able to see him.
- 105 He saw how she was coming down from up on the hill, and that from there she had been looking at him, from where she saw him before.
- 106 She came to meet him beside the hill, she came to block his way; she said to him:
- 107 *“WHAT’S HAPPENING, YOUNGEST AND DEAREST OF ALL MY SONS? WHERE ARE YOU GOING, WHERE ARE YOU HEADED FOR?”*
- 108 And he, perhaps he grieved a little, or perhaps he became ashamed? Or perhaps he became afraid of the situation, he became fearful?
- 109 He prostrated himself before her, he greeted her, he said to her:
- 110 “My little Maiden, my youngest Daughter, my Girl, I hope you are happy; how are you this morning? Does your beloved little body feel well, my Lady, my Girl?”
- 111 Although it grieves me, I will cause your face and your heart anguish: I must tell you, my little Girl, that one of your servants, my uncle, is very ill.
- 112 A terrible sickness has taken hold of him; he will surely die from it soon.
- 113 And now I shall go quickly to your little house of Mexico, to call one of the beloved ones of Our Lord, of our priests, so that he will go to hear his confession and prepare him,

- 114 because we really were born for that, we who came to wait for the difficult effort of our death.
- 115 But, if I am going to carry it out, I will return here after that to go carry your breath, your word, Lady, my little Maiden.
- 116 I beg you to forgive me, be patient with me a little longer, because I am not deceiving you with this, my youngest Daughter, my Little Girl, tomorrow without fail I will come as fast as possible.”
- 117 As soon as she heard the explanations of Juan Diego, the merciful Perfect Virgin answered him:
- 118 *“LISTEN, PUT IT INTO YOUR HEART, MY YOUNGEST AND DEAREST SON, THAT THE THING THAT FRIGHTENED YOU, THE THING THAT AFFLICTED YOU, IS NOTHING: DO NOT LET IT DISTURB YOU; DO NOT FEAR THIS SICKNESS NOR ANY OTHER SICKNESS, NOR ANY SHARP AND HURTFUL THING.*
- 119 *AM I NOT HERE, I, WHO AM YOUR MOTHER? ARE YOU NOT UNDER MY SHADOW AND PROTECTION? AM I NOT THE SOURCE OF YOUR JOY? ARE YOU NOT IN THE HOLLOW OF MY MANTLE, IN THE CROSSING OF MY ARMS? DO YOU NEED SOMETHING MORE?*
- 120 *LET NOTHING ELSE WORRY YOU, DISTURB YOU; DO NOT LET YOUR UNCLE’S ILLNESS PRESSURE YOU WITH GRIEF, BECAUSE HE WILL NOT DIE OF IT NOW, YOU MAY BE CERTAIN THAT HE IS ALREADY WELL.”*
- 121 (And at that very moment his uncle became well, as they later found out.)
- 122 And when Juan Diego heard the lovely word, the lovely breath of the Queen of Heaven, he was greatly comforted by it, his heart became peaceful,
- 123 and he begged her to send him immediately to see the Governing Bishop, to take him something for a sign, for proof, so that he would believe.
- 124 And the Queen of Heaven ordered him then to go to the top of the little hill, where he had seen her before;

125           She said to him: “GO UP, MY DEAREST SON, TO THE TOP OF THE HILL, TO  
WHERE YOU SAW ME AND I TOLD YOU WHAT TO DO;

126           *THERE YOU WILL SEE THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF FLOWERS:  
CUT THEM, GATHER THEM, PUT THEM ALL TOGETHER; THEN COME DOWN HERE;  
BRING THEM HERE, INTO MY PRESENCE.”*

127           And Juan Diego climbed to the top of the hill right away,

128           and when he reached the top, he was astonished by all of them, blooming,  
open, exotic flowers of every kind, lovely and beautiful, when it was not yet their  
season:

129           because really that was the season in which the frost was very harsh;

130           they were giving off an extremely soft fragrance; like precious pearls, as if filled  
with the dew of the night.

131           Then he began to cut them, he gathered them all, he put them in the hollow of  
his *tilma*.

132           The top of the little hill was certainly not a place in which any flowers grew;  
there are only plenty of rocks, thorns, spines, prickly pears and mesquites,

133           and even though some little herbs or grasses might grow, it was then the  
month of December, in which the frost eats everything up and destroys it.

134           And immediately he came back down, he came to bring the Heavenly Maiden  
the different kinds of flowers which he had gone up to cut,

135           and when she saw them, she took them with her precious hands;

136           then she put them all together into the hollow of his ayate again and said:

137           “MY YOUNGEST AND DEAREST SON, THESE DIFFERENT KINDS OF FLOWERS  
ARE THE PROOF, THE SIGN THAT YOU WILL TAKE TO THE BISHOP;

138           YOU WILL TELL HIM FROM ME THAT HE IS TO SEE IN THEM MY DESIRE, AND  
THAT THEREFORE HE IS TO CARRY OUT MY WISH, MY WILL.

139           AND YOU, YOU WHO ARE MY MESSENGER, IN YOU I PLACE MY ABSOLUTE  
TRUST;

140           AND I STRICTLY ORDER YOU THAT YOU ONLY OPEN YOUR AYATE ALONE, IN  
THE PRESENCE OF THE BISHOP, AND SHOW HIM WHAT YOU ARE CARRYING.

141           AND YOU WILL RELATE EVERYTHING TO HIM EXACTLY, YOU WILL TELL HIM  
THAT I ORDERED YOU TO CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THE LITTLE HILL TO CUT FLOWERS,  
AND EVERYTHING THAT YOU SAW AND ADMIRED,

142           SO THAT YOU CAN CONVINCED THE GOVERNING PRIEST, SO THAT HE WILL  
THEN DO WHAT LIES WITHIN HIS RESPONSIBILITY SO THAT MY HOUSE OF GOD  
WHICH I HAVE ASKED HIM FOR WILL BE MADE, WILL BE BUILT.”

143           And as soon as the Heavenly Queen gave him her orders, he took the  
causeway, he comes straight to Mexico City, he comes contented now.

144           His heart is tranquil now, because his errand will come out well, he will carry  
it out perfectly.

145           Along the way, he is very careful of what is in the hollow of his garment, lest  
he lose something;

146           as he comes, he enjoys the fragrance of the different kinds of precious  
flowers.

147           When he arrived at the Bishop’s residence, the doorkeeper and the other  
servants of the Governing Priest went to meet him,

148           and he begged them to tell him how much he wanted to see him, but none of them was willing; they pretended they didn't understand him, or perhaps because it was still very dark;

149           or perhaps because they felt by now that all he did was bother them and keep on insisting,

150           and their companions had already told them, the ones who lost him from sight when they were following him.

151           For a long, long time he waited for his request to be granted.

152           And when they saw that he was simply standing there for a long, long time, with his head down, without doing anything, in case he should be called, and that it looked as if he was carrying something, as if he was bringing it in the hollow of his *tilma*—then they came up close to him to see what he was bringing and satisfy their curiosity.

153           And when Juan Diego saw that there was no way in which he could hide from them what he was carrying and that therefore they might harass him or push him or perhaps cudgel him, he finally gave them a little peek and they saw that it was flowers.

154           And when they saw that they were all exquisite different flowers and that it wasn't the season for them to be blooming, they were very, very astonished by how fresh they were, how open their corollas were, how good they smelled, how handsome they seemed.

155           And they wanted to grab and pull a few out;

156           they dared to try to grab them three times, but there was no way in which they could do it,

157           because when they would try, they could no longer see the flowers; they saw them as if they were painted or embroidered or sewn on the *tilma*.

158           They went immediately to tell the Governing Bishop what they had seen,

159           and how much the lowly Indian who had come other times wanted to see him, and that he had been waiting a very long time there for permission, because he wanted to see him.

160           And as soon as the Governing Bishop heard it, he realized that this was the proof to convince him, so he could start what the humble man was asking him for.

161           He immediately ordered that he come in to see him.

162           And when he had come in, he prostrated himself in his presence, as he had done before.

163           And again he told him what he had seen and admired, and his message.

164           He said to him, “Your Excellency, sir, I have done it, I have carried out your orders;

165           that is, I went to tell my Mistress, the Heavenly Maiden, Holy Mary, the Beloved Mother of God, that you were asking for proof so you could believe me, so that you would make her sacred little house, where she was asking you to build it;

166           and I also told her that I had given you my word to come to bring you some sign, some proof of her will, as you told me to.

167           And she listened carefully to your breath, your word, and was pleased to receive your request for the sign, the proof, so that her beloved will can be done, can be carried out.

168           And today, while it was still night, she ordered me to come again to see you;

169           And I asked her for the proof so that I would be believed, as she had said that she would give it to me, and she kept her promise immediately.

170           And she ordered me to the top of the little hill where I had seen her before, to cut different Castilian roses and flowers up there.

171 And when I had cut them, I took them down to her;

172 and she took them with her holy hands,

173 again she placed them in the hollow of my *ayate*,

174 so that I would bring them to you, so I would give them only to you.

175 Although I knew very well that the top of the hill isn't a place where flowers grow, because there are only a lot of craggy rocks, thorns, spiny acacias, prickly pears, mesquite bushes, I didn't doubt because of that, I didn't hesitate because of that.

176 When I reached the top of the hill I saw that it was now paradise.

177 All kinds of different precious flowers were there, each one perfect, the very finest that there are, full of dew and shining, so I immediately cut them;

178 and she told me that I should give them to you from her, and that in this way I would show the truth; that you would see the sign that you were asking for in order to carry out her beloved will,

179 and so that it will be clear that my word, my message, is true,

180 here they are; please receive them."

181 And then he held out his white *tilma*, in the hollow of which he had placed the flowers.

182 And just as all the different precious flowers fell to the floor,

183 then and there the beloved Image of the Perfect Virgin Holy Mary, Mother of God, became the sign, suddenly appeared in the form and figure in which it is now,

184           where it is preserved in her beloved little house, in her sacred little house at  
Tepeyac, which is called Guadalupe.

185           And as soon as the governing Bishop and all those who were there saw it, they  
knelt down, they were full of awe and reverence,

186           they stood up to see it, they became sad, they wept, their hearts and minds  
were in ecstasy.

187           And the Governing Bishop with weeping and sadness begged her, asked her to  
forgive him for not having immediately carried out her will, her holy breath, her holy  
word.

188           And when he got up, he untied Juan Diego's garment from his neck where it  
was tied, the *tilma*

189           on which the Heavenly Queen appeared, on which she became the sign.

190           And then he took it and placed it in his private chapel.

191           And Juan Diego still stayed for a day in the Bishop's house, he still kept him  
there.

192           And on the next day he said to him: "Come, let's go so you can show where it  
is that the Queen of Heaven wants her chapel built."

193           People were immediately invited to make it, to build it.

194           And Juan Diego, as soon as he showed where the Lady of Heaven had ordered  
her sacred little house to be built, asked for permission:

195           he wanted to go to his house in order to see his uncle, Juan Bernardino, who  
was very ill when he left him to go to Tlatilolco to call a priest to confess him and  
prepare him, the one who the Queen of Heaven had told him had already been cured.

196 But they didn't let him go alone, rather people went with him to his house.

197 And when they arrived they saw that his uncle was now healthy; he had absolutely no pain of any kind.

198 And he, for his part, was greatly surprised by the way in which his nephew was accompanied and very honored;

199 he asked his nephew why it was that they were honoring him so much;

200 and he told him how, when he left him to go to call a priest for him who would confess him and prepare him, the Lady of Heaven appeared to him there at Tepeyac;

201 and she sent him to Mexico City to see the Governing Bishop, so that he would make her a house at Tepeyac.

202 And she told him not to worry, because his uncle was now happy, and she consoled him very much with this news.

203 His uncle told him that it was true, that she healed him at that exact moment,

204 and he saw her in exactly the same way she had appeared to his nephew,

205 and she told him that she had also sent him to Mexico City to see the Bishop;

206 and also that when he went to see him, he should reveal absolutely everything to him, he should tell him what he had seen

207 and the marvelous way in which she had healed him,

208 and that he would properly call her Beloved Image thus: it would properly be named thus, THE PERFECT VIRGIN, HOLY MARY OF GUADALUPE.

209           And then they brought Juan Bernardino into the presence of the Governing Bishop, they brought him to speak with him, to give his testimony,

210           and together with his nephew Juan Diego, the Bishop lodged them in his house for a few days,

211           while the sacred little house of the Little Queen was built out there at Tepeyac, where she revealed herself to Juan Diego.

212           And the Reverend Bishop moved the beloved Image of the Beloved Heavenly Maiden to the principal church.

213           He took her beloved Image from his residence, from his private chapel in which it was, so that all could see it and admire it.

214           And absolutely this entire city without exception, was deeply moved as everyone came to see and admire her precious Image.

215           They came to acknowledge its divine character.

216           They came to offer her their prayers.

217           They marveled at the miraculous way it had appeared,

218           since absolutely no one on earth had painted her beloved Image.

# “The Miracle”

Janet Barber