



Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Our Lady of Guadalupe is one of Christianity's most enigmatic and powerful images, embodying layers of symbolism that have captivated believers and scholars for nearly five centuries. According to tradition, the image miraculously appeared on the tilma (cloak) of indigenous peasant Juan Diego in 1531.

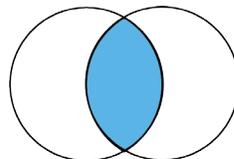
There are so many extraordinary elements in this icon - its mysterious origin, its profound symbolic fusion of indigenous culture and European Christian world, and its many other inexplicable features that suggest it was not made by human hands.

Her body proportions and positioning of key elements (head to hands, waist to feet, etc.) are based on the golden ratio, a mathematical proportion found in nature, iconography, classical art, and sacred architecture. The Virgin is presented mestiza—neither European nor indigenous—with olive skin that bridges races. She stands on a crescent moon, echoing both the Aztec moon goddess and the Woman of the Apocalypse from Christian scripture. Her starry mantle reflects the constellation visible over Mexico City on December 12, 1531 – the date of the apparition, while she conveys humility and maternal compassion with downcast eyes and prayerful hands.

The tilma, made from cactus fiber typically deteriorates within decades, yet it is remarkably preserved at 500 years of age. Scientific analysis revealed peculiar characteristics: the image appears to have no visible brushstrokes, the colors seem to emanate from within the fibers, and infrared photography shows what appears to be reflected human figures in her eyes.

The *Vesica Piscis* is the structure of its underlying geometry (see below), symbolizing spiritual birth or enlightenment.

Our Lady of Guadalupe was the catalyst for one of the largest conversions to Christianity and is considered one of the most revered images of Mary in the Americas.



Kati Reyes, Iconographer

