

A Special Mexican Holiday

# *The Virgen of Guadalupe - December 12th*

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**D**ECEMBER 12<sup>th</sup> is a very special day for Mexico.

On this day is the celebration of **Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe**

(Our Lady of

Guadalupe). Here in

Mexico you will see mass ceremonies and a traditional fair in her honor. You will see parades walking through the streets during 3 weeks before December 12th.

Today, tens of thousands of people flock to Mexico City to visit the place where the Virgin appeared to the Mexican People. Pilgrims bring presents to the virgin, usually bouquets of flowers while other visitors will perform dances and song for her. For foreigners to understand the celebration you must know her importance in Mexican history.



that she wanted a sanctuary built in her honor to alleviate the sufferings of the people that believed in her. At first the Bishop didn't believe him. Juan returned to Tepeyac for several days to get proof for the Bishop. On Dec. 12 this dark skinned Virgin Mary told Juan to gather roses that were on top of the hill—it was unusual for roses that time of year. Juan Diego gathered the roses in his coat and headed to the Bishop. Juan Diego gave the coat full of flowers to the Bishop, and here the bishop discovered the image of Virgin Mary's picture which was miraculously traced on the coat. Seeing both the unseasonal flowers and the image of the Virgin, the Bishop realized Juan Diego had told him the truth. And so the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe was built on the hill of Tepeyac in Mexico City.

## **THE BASILICA**

In Monterrey, the Basilica is located in Colonial Independencia on the southern side of the down town. You can see the modern looking building from Constitution. There are "parades" of Dancers, called Danzonites or Matlachines—in

Nathuatl, the Aztec language – through all parts of Monterrey, especially down town. They are on their pilgrimage to the Basilica. Natives come from Torreon, Matamoros and Saltillo. Many walk here, some even barefoot, as a show of devotion. Many dress in extremely wild and colorful costumes and groups have their own certain dance step on their journey. There is also a yearly TV spectacular called a Serenita, on Dec. 11 starting at 11:00 and goes until 12:30 with all the top performers of the country serenading the Virgin from the Basilica in Mexico City.



## **WHY THEY CELEBRATE**

The Story behind this celebration demonstrates how the Catholic faith gained importance in the hearts of the Mexican people. It is a story of miracles and faith which mark a change in the history of Mexico.



On Dec. 9 1531 Juan Diego, a humble man from Tolpetlac first encountered an apparition on the hills of Tepeyac, currently in the central of Mexico City. A beautiful young woman told him



that she was the Virgin Mary, mother of the true God and told him to go to the Bishops house to tell him