



11 Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe

NINE DAYS WITH THE LADY OF TEPEYAC
DECEMBER 3 TO DECEMBER 11 · HER FEAST, DECEMBER 12

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How to Pray This Novena

A novena is nine days of the same asking. Not nine different prayers, but one request carried patiently, the way a friend is asked again.

Begin on December 3 and end on December 11, the eve of her feast. Each day has a page: a word of Scripture, a short reading, and the prayer of the novena. Say the prayer aloud if you can, and name your intention in the silence the prayer leaves for it.

The nine days follow the story as it was first written down in Nahuatl, the language of Juan Diego: from a December morning on the hill of Tepeyac to the image on his cloak.

If you begin late, begin anyway. Nine days that end after the feast are still nine days.



DAY ONE

The Hill of Tepeyac



he flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON 2 : 12

Before dawn on December 9, 1531, Juan Diego was crossing the hill of Tepeyac on his way to Mass when he heard singing so beautiful he wondered if he had died. A lady called him by name, in his own language, and sent him to the bishop: she wanted a house built there.

She did not choose a priest. Ask her today to find you on your ordinary road.

PRAYER OF THE NOVENA

O God, who hast placed us under the singular protection of the most blessed Virgin Mary, and willed that we should be filled with unceasing benefits: grant to thy suppliants that, as we rejoice in her memory on earth, so we may enjoy the sight of her in heaven.

Holy Mary of Guadalupe, who didst ask Juan Diego, *Am I not here, I who am thy mother?* Look upon me who come to thee in this need, and carry to thy Son the thing I now name before thee:

.....
here name your request

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us. Saint Juan Diego, pray for us. Amen.

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DAY TWO

Send Someone Else

God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

1 CORINTHIANS 1 : 27

The bishop, Juan de Zumárraga, listened kindly and did not believe him. That evening Juan Diego went back to the hill and asked her to send someone of standing instead. I am nobody, he told her, a leaf, a small rope.

She answered that she had many servants, and chose him anyway. Name the thing you feel too small to carry, and do not ask to be excused from it.

PRAYER OF THE NOVENA

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Holy Mary of Guadalupe, who didst ask Juan Diego, *Am I not here, I who am thy mother?* Look upon me who come to thee in this need, and carry to thy Son the thing I now name before thee:

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DAY THREE

A Sign

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son.

ISAIAH 7 : 14

On Sunday he went back, waited for hours, and wept. The bishop asked for a sign. The Lady took no offence, and told him to return the next day: the sign would be given.

Asking for a sign is not always a lack of faith. Sometimes it is the only honest thing a careful man can say. Ask for one you will know when it comes.

PRAYER OF THE NOVENA

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DAY FOUR

The Other Road

My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed.

MARK 5 : 23

He did not go back. His uncle, Juan Bernardino, had fallen gravely ill. Before dawn on Tuesday Juan Diego ran to fetch a priest and, ashamed, took the path around the hill so the Lady would not stop him.

She came down to meet him on the other road. Whatever you have been walking around this week, ask her to meet you there.

PRAYER OF THE NOVENA

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DAY FIVE

Am I Not Here?



hen saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!

JOHN 19 : 27

She did not scold him. She asked: Am I not here, I who am your mother? Are you not in my shadow, under my protection? She told him his uncle was already healed. At that hour she stood by Juan Bernardino's bed and gave her name: Holy Mary of Guadalupe.

Say her question back to yourself today, slowly, and let it answer the fear you brought to this page.

PRAYER OF THE NOVENA

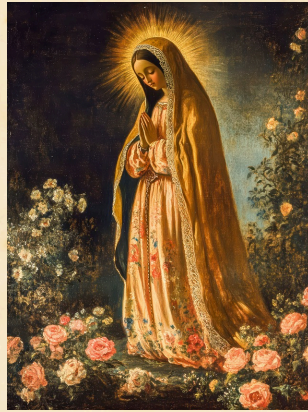
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DAY SIX

Roses in December

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

ISAIAH 35 : 1

She sent him to the top of the hill, where only stones and cactus grew, and in December only frost. He found roses of Castile in bloom and carried them down in his cloak. She arranged them with her own hands and told him to open it before no one but the bishop.

Ask today for something to flower where you have stopped expecting it.

PRAYER OF THE NOVENA

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DAY SEVEN

Before the Bishop



e hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

LUKE 1 : 52

Before the bishop, Juan Diego opened his cloak. The roses fell to the floor, and on the rough cactus-fibre cloth was the Virgin, as she had appeared to him. The bishop and his household knelt before a poor man's cloak.

The sign was not only the roses. It was who was holding them. Ask to be less impressed by standing, beginning with your own.

PRAYER OF THE NOVENA

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DAY EIGHT

Clothed with the Sun

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun,
and the moon under her feet.

REVELATION 12 : 1

Read the image as its first viewers did. She stands in front of the sun and above the moon, the old gods of the land, and she bows her head: she is not a goddess. Her hands are joined in prayer to someone greater than she is.

Everything in the picture points past her. Ask her today to turn you, too, towards her Son.

PRAYER OF THE NOVENA

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DAY NINE

No Other Nation

He hath not dealt so with any nation.

PSALM 147 : 20

In 1754 Pope Benedict XIV approved her feast on December 12. Tradition says he answered a copy of the image with this verse. Nearly five centuries later the cloak still hangs above the altar at Tepeyac, and millions come to see it every December.

Tomorrow is her feast. Bring back the request you have carried nine days, and leave it with her.

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