

One Tilma, One Heart: Walking with Our Lady of Guadalupe in the Footsteps of Saint Juan Diego

*"A people whose heart beats, evangelizes and builds hope"
In the context of the Intercontinental Guadalupe Novena 2022-2031*



Objective: To foster re-encounter with God, through Holy Mary of Guadalupe, seeking new paths to renew the social and ecclesial fabric of our people and communities, in celebration of the 500 years of the Guadalupan Event.

Pastoral Grounding

This Guadalupan journey is based on a pedagogy of encounter that Mary of Guadalupe taught us through her image imprinted on Saint Juan Diego's cloak (*tilma*). The simplicity of the maguey-fiber cloth invites us to wrap ourselves in Mary's loving presence, and carry her love to every corner of the country and the continent, thus becoming messengers of hope, like the indigenous Juan Diego once did.

As Pope Francis stated in his homily on December 12, 2022, at the beginning of the Intercontinental Guadalupe Novena:

"The Lord wanted to transform the upheaval brought about by the encounter between two different worlds, turning it into a recovery of sense, a recovery of dignity, an opening to the Gospel, into a recovery of meaning and dignity. This he did by sending Mary, his mother [...] Thus our Lady of Guadalupe came to the blessed lands of America, presenting herself as the "Mother of the true God for whom we live"; to console, and attend to the needs of the little ones, without excluding anyone, to embrace them as a caring mother with her presence, love and consolation. She's our mestizo mother."

And as he reaffirms in the Papal Bull of the *Jubilee Spes non confundit*:

"Through Juan Diego, the Mother of God brought a revolutionary message of hope that she continues to bring to every pilgrim and all the faithful: "Am I not here, I, who am your mother?" That message continues to touch hearts in the many Marian shrines throughout the world, where countless pilgrims commend to the Holy Mother of God their cares, their sorrows, and their hopes. During the Jubilee Year, may these shrines be sacred places of welcome, privileged spaces for the rebirth of hope."

Comprehensive Vision

This journey aligns with the Intercontinental Guadalupe Novena's Strategic Plan and its five strategic ideas:

- Ongoing formation regarding the Guadalupan Event
- Comprehensive research of the Guadalupan Event
- Promotion of an informed and testimonial devotion
- Wide dissemination of the Guadalupan message
- Creative production of the Guadalupan Event

Additionally, it is based on these dimensions:

- **Christocentric:** This journey leads us toward an encounter with Jesus Christ, placing Marian devotion at the center as a privileged path to Christ the Redeemer, with the horizon of the Great Jubilee of 2033.
- **Ecclesiological:** By fostering a synodal church experience that walks together, listens to everyone, and builds unity in diversity.
- **Social:** Healing wounds in the social fabric: immigrants, missing people, victims of violence, divided communities, and fractured families.
- **Universal:** With an intercontinental dimension that unites people across the Americas and the world under the mantle of Guadalupe.

Elements of the Journey

1. The Tilma as a Sign and Pedagogy

The Tilma is not only a devotional object but a living, **catechetical witness** that:

- Wraps us in Mary's presence, transforming our actions and our lives
- Carries our worries, as St. Juan Diego carried the roses
- Manifests the miracle of divine presence in the simplicity of everyday life.
- Transforms realities through encounter and listening.

At the same time, it is a **powerful instrument of evangelizing** because:

“During the encounter between St. Juan Diego and the Virgin, he becomes aware that his dignity and value don't come from other men, but from the “God for whom we live”, from whom Mary of Guadalupe is the bearer. St. Juan Diego, by recognizing himself as a loved son, can pass through difficulties and become Mary of Guadalupe's messenger at first and then an evangelist with the testimony of its simple faith.”

In the words of Pope Francis, we must ensure that “the message does not ‘filter’ through mundane ideological rules. The message is simple, it's tender: ‘Am I not here, I, who am your mother?’. And the mother is not ideologized.” In this way, the tilma becomes an authentic sign of encounter between God and his people, between different cultures, and between sisters and brothers called to reconciliation.

2. The Guadalupan Roses and Youth and Young Adult Pilgrimages

We will revitalize traditional devotions with renewed pastoral meaning:

- **Guadalupe Roses** as a sign of intentions, suffering, and hope
- **Silver Roses** as an expression of renewed traditional devotion
- **Guadalupan Races and Youth and Young Adult Torches** which link:
 - Young people with their shrine
 - Local communities with their diocesan shrines
 - Traditional pilgrimages with their renewed evangelizing message.
- These elements naturally connect with **Youth and Young Adult Ministry** and build intergenerational bridges.

- Pilgrimages become events for formation and commitment- not just devotion.

3. The Juandieguitos (Little Juan Diegos)

Formation of local Guadalupean missionaries ("Juandieguitos") who:

- Accompany the tilma on its journey
- Listen to their community's needs
- Facilitate an encounter between the Virgin Mary and the people
- Promote concrete actions to mend the social fabric

Resources will be provided.

Following the reflection of Pope Francis:

"Today, like yesterday, Our Lady of Guadalupe wants to meet us too as she did one day with Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac. She wants to stay with us. She begs us to allow her to be our mother, to open our lives to her Son Jesus and to welcome his message so as to learn to love like Him."

The Juandieguitos are those who, recognizing themselves as small as Juan Diego—"I'm tail, I'm wing, I myself need to be led" (*Nican Mopohua*), allow Mary to encounter her people, especially with the sisters and brothers who are forgotten and discarded by consumerist and apathetic societies.

4. The Dwellings or Sacred Houses

Each community that receives the Tilma becomes a **sacred little house**, remembering the Virgin Mary's words to Juan Diego: ***"Am I not here, I, who am your mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection?"***

- Shelters, especially for vulnerable people
- Centers for listening and reconciliation
- Places for formation based on the spirituality of Guadalupe

As highlighted by Pope Francis, Mary *"came to accompany the American people on this hard journey of poverty, exploitation, socioeconomic and cultural colonialism."* Today, these sacred houses turn into spaces where:

- *"She's in the midst of caravans that walk northward in search of freedom and wellbeing"*
- *"She's in the middle of the American people whose identity is threatened"*
- She answers with her comforting presence: ***"I'm your Mother, the Mother of the God for whom we live"***

Methodological Process

Inaugural Stage: Episcopal Presentation

- **Solemn presentation of the Sacred Tilma** (a relic) to the bishops during a Plenary Assembly.
- Every bishop becomes the *first messenger and missionary disciple of Guadalupe*
- Special blessing of the *tilmas* by the Rector of the Basilica of Guadalupe
- Episcopal commitment to enthrone the image on the principal shrines, basilicas or Guadalupan churches in every diocese

Stage 1: See - Encounter and Listening

- Participatory analysis of each community's painful and hopeful realities
- Identifying the "**Contemporary Tepeyacs**" (places of suffering and exclusion)
- Formation of diocesan teams of *Juandieguitos*

Stage 2: Illuminate - Guadalupan Formation

- Catechesis on the theological message of the image of Guadalupe
- In-depth study of the life and virtues of Saint Juan Diego
- Workshops on the social dimension of the Guadalupan message
- Spirituality of communion and synodality

Stage 3: Act - Procession of the Tilma

- Diocesan enthronement in the presence of the bishop
- A journey through parishes, communities, and "contemporary Tepeyacs"
- Inculturated celebrations adapted to each local reality
- Collection of testimonies and intentions in the form of "Guadalupan roses"

Stage 4: Celebrate - Fruits of the Journey

- Celebration of signs of transformation and hope
- Concrete commitments to mending the social fabric
- Visual and written accounts of the encounters with the tilma
- Establish permanent "*sacred little houses*"

Intercontinental Pastoral and Integral Dimensions

Responding to Pope Francis' call in his Papal Bull, *Spes non confondit*, this journey intends for Guadalupan sanctuaries to become "*sacred places of welcome and privileged spaces for the rebirth of hope,*" by establishing a network of **sacred little houses** where everyone can experience the maternal closeness of Mary of Guadalupe, a **sign of true hope and comfort for the people of God**.

As a part of this stage, the journey "**One Tilma, One Heart**" intends to:

- **Unify the country's Guadalupan devotion** for peace and unity
- Strengthen the network of **Guadalupan diocesan animators**
- Link **pastors, diocesan pilgrimages coordinators, and shrine rectors**
- Connect with the Committees and initiatives **of the** Conference of Bishops

Integration with existing pastoral structures:

- **Integration with pastoral efforts** at ecclesial provincial, diocesan and parish levels.
- **Adaptation of the Guadalupe novena** to different contexts and pastoral realities.
- **Coordination with existing pastoral plans at the diocesan and parish level**
- **Involvement of various ministries** (youth, family, social, etc.)

Its intercontinental dimension:

- Connects local realities with the global context
- Fosters an exchange of experiences between dioceses from different countries
- Recognizes the reality of migrants as bridges between cultures and nations
- Strengthens the Guadalupe identity as a spiritual heritage of the Americas

Expected Outcomes

Recalling Pope Francis' words in his homily on December 12th, 2022—he notes that “And although this horizon seems bleak and disconcerting,...this too is a propitious time of salvation, in which the Lord, through the Virgin Mother, continues to give us his Son,” we hope for the following outcomes for this journey:

- Renewal of a Christocentric faith through Marian mediation
- Revitalization of ecclesial communities with a synodal spirit
- Reconciliation and peace in contexts of violence and polarization
- Social commitment that helps us “take care of one another ‘without delay’”
- Strengthening of Mexican, Latin American, and Hispanic/Latino cultural identity
- The experience of a Church that reaches the peripheries
- Consolidation of the network of Marian-Guadalupe shrines as “holy refuges (spaces of welcome) and privileged spaces for generating hope”
- Participation in an authentic Guadalupe spirit which, as noted by Pope Francis, does not allow “the messages to be ‘diluted’ into worldly and ideological frameworks”

Pastoral Coordination

The Guadalupe journey “One Tilma, One Heart” is coordinated with:

- **The Intercontinental Guadalupe Novena** (2022-2031) and its strategic pillars
- **The Synodal process** of the universal church, especially in light of Pope Francis' words on Juan Diego's synodal experience
- **The Holy Jubilee Year 2025** as a favorable time for hope, according to the *Bull Spes non confundit*
- **Preparation for the 500th Anniversary of the Guadalupe Apparition in 2031** and the Great Jubilee Year of the Resurrection in 2033
- **Social Ministry:** projects to mend the social fabric and traditional artisanal works of peace.
- **Family Ministry** and support for vulnerable families

- **Youth and Young Adult Ministry** with a focus on young people such as the “Juandieguitos” and the Guadalupan Races
Network of Diocesan Guadalupan Animators promoted in the Intercontinental Novena Strategic Plan
- **Network of Marian Shrines** as “holy refuges (spaces of welcome) and privileged spaces for generating hope”

Enthronement of the Tilma of Our Lady of Guadalupe in U.S. Dioceses

In preparation of the **500th Anniversary of the Guadalupe Event** (1531-2031) and as part of the **International Guadalupe Novena’s** strategic plan (2025-2028), it is proposed to enthrone a faithful **replica of the Tilma of Saint Juan Diego** in every diocese of the United States, fostering a profound spiritual renewal and unity under the protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Implementation Strategy

1. General Coordination

- **Central Coordinator:** A Diocesan Guadalupan Animator will coordinate locally and be appointed by the Bishop and the Vicar for Pastoral Ministry
- **Guadalupan Ambassador:** In every church hosting the Tilma, a committed layperson will be appointed as custodian and promoter of the project and the image. They will also serve as a liaison with the Distinguished and National Basilica of Holy Mary of Guadalupe.
- **Vicar for Pastoral Ministry:** In conjunction with the Diocesan Pilgrimage Coordinator, they will ensure that the activities are coordinated and included in the Diocesan pastoral plan.

2. Replica of the Tilma

- Each diocese will receive a **blessed replica** of the Tilma of Saint Juan Diego, created by the International Guadalupan Novena.
- If possible, include a **special presentation** ceremony and a Mass.

3. Presentation and Enthronement

- Solemn diocesan event for the enthronement: Mass, procession, prayer of consecration, and blessing of the community under the mantle of Mary.
- Invitation to bishops of the Province, priests, religious, civil authorities, and faithful lay people.

4. Formation for Guadalupan Animators and Ambassadors

- A short in-person or online training course offered by the USCCB in coordination with the Basilica or via digital platforms.

- Suggested topics:
 - History of the Guadalupe Apparition
 - Theological and pastoral significance of the Tilma
 - Marian spirituality
 - Leadership and mission of the Guadalupe Ambassador.

5. Subsequent Pastoral Plan

- Each community will design **pastoral activities** centered on the Tilma:
- Monthly novenas
- Local pilgrimages
- Days of prayer for peace and life
- Special Masses on Marian holidays
- Guadalupe catechesis for children, young people, and adults.

6. Communication and Follow-up

- Create a national digital network (Social Media, email, website) for Guadalupe Animators
- Share stories, photos, and news about the enthronements on social media and through diocesan media outlets
- Share an annual progress report with the USCCB.

Suggested Timeline

Activity	Date
Project Presentation to the Bishops	June 2026
Selection of Guadalupe Animators and Ambassadors	September- December 2026
Initial Formation	January 2027
Diocesan Enthronements	February 2027 - December 2027
Pastoral Activities	2027-2031

Resources needed for this enthronement:

- Replicas of the Tilma
- Guadalupe Formation Manual
- Liturgical and pastoral materials
- Logistical support (transport, setup)
- Local budget for celebrations.

This enthronement will renew faith, strengthen Marian identity, and foster a fervent preparation for 2031.

“Am I not here, I, who am your mother? ... Are you not under my shadow? Am I not the source of your joy? Are you not, perhaps, in the crossing of my arms?”