



## The Nican Mopohua

(This translation of the Nican Mopohua was made by Davina Baca: It is based on Fr. Mario Rojas' translation from the Nahuatl to Spanish)

### □ Prologue & Chapter 1: Juan Diego Meets the Virgin

Here is told and set down in an orderly manner how a short time ago the Perfect Virgin Holy Mary Mother of God, Our Queen, miraculously appeared on Tepeyac, commonly known as Guadalupe. She first caused Herself to be seen by a humble Indian, named Juan Diego, and afterwards Her precious image appeared before the newly appointed Bishop Don Fray Juan de Zumarraga.

Ten years after the conquest of Mexico City, when the arrows and spears had been laid aside, when everywhere there was peace among peoples, just as faith now sprouts, now opens its corolla, so too, the knowledge of Him by whom we live: the true God.

At that time, the year 1531, a few days into the month of December, it happened that there was a humble Indian, a poor man of the people, by the name of Juan Diego; according to what is said, a resident of, Cuauhtitlan, and in religious matters, he belonged entirely to Tlatilolco. It was early Saturday morning, he was coming in pursuit of God and his commandments.

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And as he drew near to the little hill called Tepeyac it was beginning to dawn. 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; their songs, extremely soft and delightful, surpassed that of the coyoltotl and the tzinitzcan and of other precious birds.

Juan Diego stopped to look. He said to himself: "By any chance am I worthy, have I deserved what I am hearing? Perhaps I am dreaming it? Perhaps I am dozing? Where am I? Where do I find myself? Is it possible that I am in the place that our ancient ancestors, our grandparents spoke about, in the land of flowers, in the land of corn, of our flesh, of our sustenance, possibly in the land of heaven?"

He was looking toward the top of the hill, toward the direction from which the sun rises, from whence precious heavenly singing was coming. And then the singing suddenly stopped, when it was no longer heard, then he heard someone calling him from the top of the hill; the voice called: “ Juan, dearest Juan Diego.”

He then ventured in the direction of the voice; his heart was not troubled and he felt no anxiety, rather he felt extremely happy and contented; he began to climb the little hill to see where he was being called. And when he reached the top of the little hill, when a young Maiden (Juan guessed that she was about thirteen years of age!) who was standing there saw him, She bade him approach her.

And when he reached the spot where She was, he was filled with wonder at the way Her perfect grandeur surpassed all imagination: Her clothing shone like the sun, as if it vibrated, and the stone, the promontory on which She stood, emitted something like rays of light. Her resplendence was like precious stones, it seemed like an exquisite bracelet (it seemed beautiful beyond anything else); the earth gleamed as with the splendor of the rainbow in the mist. And the mesquites and the cacti and all the other little plants that usually grow there seemed like emeralds. Their foliage appeared like turquoise. And their trunks, their thorns, their spines shone like gold.

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He prostrated himself in Her presence. He listened to Her breath, her speech, which was full of esteem, extremely kind, as coming from someone who attracted him to Herself and who greatly esteemed him. She said: “Listen, my youngest Son, Juanito, Where are you going?” And he answered Her: “My Lady, my Queen, Child, I am going to Your little house in Mexico-Tlatilolco, to pursue 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.”

Then, and with this dialogue with him She (the Lady) reveals to him Her precious will. She tells him, “Know for sure, my youngest son, that I am the perfect ever-Virgin, Holy Mary, Mother of the true God, through whom all being has existence, the creator of mankind, the Lord of all that surrounds and touches your lives, the Lord of heaven and earth, I ardently desire that My sacred temple, My “Teocalli” should be built here, where I shall introduce Him, I shall praise Him, as I make Him known, where I shall give Him to the people in all My personal love, in My compassionate gaze, in My help, and in My salvation: because I am your compassionate Mother.”

“Yours and of all the other people who live as one in this land, and of all the other people of different lineages, who love Me, those who cry to Me, those who seek Me, and those who confide in Me. Because there I will listen to their weeping, to their sorrows, in order to remedy, to cure all their various afflictions, their necessities, their sufferings. And to achieve what My compassionate and merciful gaze is trying to realize, go to the residence of the bishop of Mexico, and tell him that I am sending you in order that you may reveal to him how I ardently desire for him to provide Me with a house here, that he should build My temple in the plain; you shall tell him everything, all that you have seen and marveled at, and what you have heard. “And know for sure that I shall be most grateful, and I shall repay you, because of it I shall enrich you, I will glorify you; and because of it you will greatly merit the manner in which I will reward your efforts, the service you will render in going to request the manner for which I am sending you.

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Now My dearest son, you have heard My breath, My word; go do your part.” And immediately he prostrated himself in Her presence; and said to Her; “My Lady, my Child, I am going right away to do Your venerable breath, Your word; I take my leave of You, for the moment, I, your poor Indian.”

□ Chapter 2: The Visit to the Bishop & the Second Apparition

Then he descended the hill to put into action the errand entrusted to him; he came to the causeway, he came directly to Mexico. When he arrived at the center of the city, he went straight away to the palace of the bishop, who had just recently arrived, the governing priest; his name was Fray Juan de Zumarraga, of the Order of St. Francis. As soon as he got there, he tried to see him, he begged his servants, his aides, to go and tell him so. After a long time had passed, they came to call him, when the reverend bishop ordered that he should enter.

And as soon as he entered, he knelt before him, he prostrated himself, then he revealed to him, he told him the precious breath, the precious word of the Queen of Heaven, Her message, and also all that he had marveled at, seen and heard. And after hearing his whole story, his message, it appeared as if he really did not believe it to be true. He answered him, saying, “Come again, my son, and then I will hear you out calmly, and will look into the matter from the very beginning, I will consider the reason that you have come, your will, your wish.” He went out; he was downcast, because the mission that had been entrusted to him had not been realized immediately.

At the end of the day, he returned, he came straight from there to the little hilltop, and he had the good fortune of meeting the Queen of Heaven; She was waiting for him there at the very spot where She had appeared the first time. And as soon as he saw Her, he prostrated himself before Her, he cast himself to the ground, saying to Her: “My dearest little Mistress, my Lady, my Queen, my dearest daughter, my Child, I already went to the place where you sent me to carry out your kind breath, your kind word, as you asked me to.

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He received me kindly and he listened to it perfectly well, but, by the way he answered me, it seemed that he had not understood it, that he does not believe it.

He told me : “Come again, my son, and then I will hear you out calmly, and will look into the matter from the very beginning, I will consider the reason that you have come, your will, your wish.” By the way he answered me, I could clearly see that he thinks that Your house that You want built here, that maybe I am just making it up, or that maybe it does not come from your lips. I beg You, my Lady, My Queen, my little One, to entrust one of the nobles, to bear Your kind breath, Your kind word, someone who is held in esteem, someone who is known, respected, and honored in order that he might be believed. Because I am really just a man of the field, I am a mecapalli (a burden bearer) a cacaxtli (a back frame), I am a tail, I am a wing, a man of no importance; I myself need to be led, to be carried on someone’s back, the place to which You send me is a place where I am unaccustomed to going nor in which I am accustomed to spending any time, my Virgin, my youngest Daughter, my Lady, my Little One; please forgive me ; for I shall afflict Your countenance with grief, Your heart; I may fall into Your anger, into Your displeasure, my Lady, my Mistress.”

The Perfect Virgin, worthy of honor and veneration, answered him, “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, that they might carry out My will; but it

is necessary that you, personally, go and plead that My wish, My will, become a reality, that it be carried out through your intercession. And I beg you, My youngest and dearest son, and I order you strictly, to go again tomorrow to see the bishop. And in My name let him know, let him hear My wish, My will, so that he might fulfill it, might build My temple (My teocalli) which I ask of him. And tell him again that it is I, personally, the ever-Virgin Mary, I, who am the Mother of God, who sends you.”

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Juan Diego, for his part, answered her saying, “My Lady, my Queen, my Little One, let me not afflict your face, your heart, with grief, I shall most gladly go to carry out your breath, your word. In no way shall I fail to do it, nor do I consider the means (of doing it) a bother. I shall go and put your will into action, but perhaps I shall not be heard, I may not be believed. Tomorrow afternoon, when the sun goes down, I shall come to return to your word, to your breath, with the response from the governing priest. And now I shall respectfully take my leave of you, my Daughter, smallest of them all, Young Lady, my Mistress, my Little One, rest just a little more.”

□ Chapter 3: The Second Visit to the Bishop

And then he went to his home to rest. On the following day, Sunday, while it was still pre-dawn, everything was still dark, he set out from there, from his home, he came straight to Tlatilolco, he came to learn about God and to be included in the roll call; then to see the reverend bishop. And about ten o'clock everything had been taken care of: Mass had been celebrated, roll taken and the crowd dispersed. And Juan Diego then went to the reverend bishop's residence. And as soon as he arrived, he went through the whole struggle to see him, and after a great deal of effort, he saw him again; he knelt at his feet, he wept, he became sad as he spoke to him, as he made known to him the word, the breath of the Queen of Heaven, that hopefully the message, the will of the Perfect Virgin, might be believed, that of making Her, that of building Her sacred little house, where She had said, where She had wanted it.

And the governing bishop asked him a great many things, he cross-examined him, in order to ascertain where he had seen Her, what she was like ; he told the lord bishop absolutely everything. And although he recounted everything with great exactitude and in each detail he saw, he was amazed that it appeared with obvious clarity that She was the perfect Virgin, the kind wonderful Mother of Our Savior, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, it was not realized right away. He said that his petition could not be carried out, could not be realized based on his

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word alone, that some other sign was very necessary if he was to believe that in fact the Queen of Heaven in person was sending him. As soon as Juan Diego heard this, he said to the bishop: “Lord Governor, think about what the sign you will ask for should be, because then I shall go ask the Queen of Heaven who sent me for it.”

And when the bishop saw that he was in agreement, that he did not hesitate or doubt in the slightest, he dismissed him. And as soon as he was on his way, he ordered some of his house-hold staff in whom he had absolute confidence to go along following him, that they

should observe him carefully regarding where he went, whom he saw, to whom he spoke. And that's what they did. And Juan Diego came directly. He took the causeway. And those that 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. And so they turned back. Not only because they were greatly annoyed about this, but because he had also frustrated their intentions, he made them angry.

So they went to tell the lord bishop, they put into his head that he should not believe him, they told him that 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. Therefore they decided that if he came again, if he returned, they would seize him there and would punish him severely, so that he would never again tell lies or agitate the people.

#### Chapter 4: The Third Apparition

Meanwhile, Juan Diego was with the Most Holy Virgin telling Her the lord bishop's response, which when She heard it, She said to him: "that's fine, My dear son, you will come back here tomorrow so that you can take to the bishop the sign that he has asked you for; with this he will believe you, and he will no longer suspect you; and know My dear son, that I will reward your attention and the effort and fatigue that you have undertaken on my behalf. So, go now; I will be waiting here for you here tomorrow."

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And on the following day, Monday, when Juan Diego was to take some sign in order to be believed, he did not return. Because when he arrived at his house, the sickness had struck an uncle of his, named Juan Bernadino, and he was seriously ill. He went to call the doctor, who even treated him but it was too late; he was already very ill. And when night came, his uncle begged him that he should go at daybreak setting out while it was still dark, to come call for a priest from Tlatilolco to go to him to hear his confession and to prepare him, because he was sure that the time and place had now come for him to die, because he would never rise again, he would no longer get well.

And on Tuesday, while it was still quite night, Juan Diego left his house to come to Tlatilolco to get the priest, 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 set on, which was his usual route, he said: "If I continue ahead on the road, it is possible that this Lady will see me, and surely detain me, as before in order that I might take the sign to the governing ecclesiastic as She has requested; first let this trail leave us; first I must quickly call the religious priest; for my uncle is waiting anxiously for him," Immediately he then went around the hill, ascending over the middle of it and crossing from there and emerging on the eastern side, so that he could go to Mexico quickly, so that the Queen of Heaven would not detain him. He thinks that where he made the turn, She who sees everywhere perfectly, will not see him.

#### □ Chapter 5: The Fourth Apparition

He saw how She was coming down from on top of the hill, and that She had been watching him from there, from that place where She had seen him before. She came down to meet him on the side of the hill, She came to intercept him; She said to him: "What is the matter, youngest and dearest of my sons? Where are you going, where are you headed?" And he, perhaps he was somewhat distressed, perhaps a bit embarrassed? Or perhaps he became

afraid of the situation, he became fearful. He prostrated himself before Her, he greeted Her, he said to Her; "My young Lady, youngest of my Children, my Child, I hope

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You are happy; how are You this morning, my Lady, my little One? Although it grieves me, I will cause Your face and Your heart anguish: I must tell you, my little Child, that one of Your servants, my uncle, is very ill. A terrible sickness has taken hold of him; he will surely die of it soon.

And now I shall go quickly to Your little house in (in the city of) Mexico, to call one of our priests, the beloved ones of Our Lord, so that he will go to hear his confession and prepare him, because we really were born for that, we who came to wait for the painful effort of our death. But, if I am going to carry it out, I will return here after that to go carry Your breath, Your word, Lady, my Maiden One, 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 Beloved Maiden. Tomorrow without fail I will come as fast as possible." As soon as She heard the explanations of Juan Diego, the Merciful Perfect Virgin answered him: "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. 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? 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". And at that very moment his uncle became well, as they later found out. And when Juan Diego heard the blessed breath, the blessed words, of the Queen of Heaven, he was greatly comforted by them, and his heart became peaceful. And he begged Her to send him immediately to see the Governing Bishop, to take him something for the sign, for the proof so that he would believe. And the Queen of Heaven ordered him then to go to the top of the little hill, where he had seen Her before. 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; There you will see that there are different kinds of flowers. Cut them, gather them, put them all together; then come

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down here; bring them here, into My presence." Juan Diego climbed to the top the top of the hill right away. And when he reached the top, he was astonished by all of them, blooming, open, flowers of every kind, lovely and beautiful, when it still was not their season, because really that was the season in which the frost was very harsh. They were giving off an extremely soft fragrance; like precious pearls, as if filled with the dew of the night. Then he began to cut them, he gathered them all, he put them in the hollow of his tilma. 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 mesquite trees. 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. 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.

And when She saw them, She took them with Her precious hands; then again putting them all together into the hollow of his ayate She said: My youngest-and-dearest son, these different kinds of flowers are the proof, the sign that you will take to the bishop. 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. And you, you who are My messenger, in you I place my absolute

confidence; and I strictly order you that you only open your tilma alone in the presence of the bishop, and show him what you are carrying. And you will tell him everything 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, so that you can convince the governing priest, so that he will then do what lies within his responsibility so that My temple which I have asked him for will be made, will be raised." And as soon as the Queen of Heaven gave him Her orders, he took the causeway, he comes straight to Mexico City. He comes happily now. His heart is tranquil now, because his errand will come out well, he will carry it out perfectly. Along the way, he is very careful of what is in the hollow of his garment, lest he lose something. As he comes, he enjoys the

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fragrance of the different kinds of exquisite flowers.

□ Chapter 6: The Third Visit to the Bishop

When he arrived at the Bishop's residence, the doorkeeper and the other servants of the Governing Priest went to meet him. 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, perhaps because it was still very dark; or perhaps because they felt by now that all he did was to bother them and to keep on insisting, and their companions had already told them, the ones who lost him from sight when they were following him. For a long, long time he waited for his request to be granted. 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 (cuexāntli); then they came up close to him to see what he was bringing and thus satisfy their curiosity.

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 perhaps hurt him and the flowers, he finally gave them a little peek and they saw that it was flowers. 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 good they smelled, how handsome they seemed. And they wanted to grab and pull a few out. They dared to try to grab them three times, but there was no way in which they could do it, 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.

They went immediately to tell the Governing Bishop what they had seen, 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. And as soon as the

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Governing Bishop heard it, he realized that this was the proof to convince him to get started on what the humble man was asking him for. He immediately ordered that he come in to see him. And when [Juan Diego] had come in, he prostrated himself in [the Bishop's] presence, as he had done before. And again he told him what he had seen and admired, and his message. He said to him, "Your Excellency, sir! I have done it. I have carried out your orders. That is, I went to tell my Mistress, the Queen of Heaven, 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. 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. 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 should be done, should be a reality.

And today, while it was still night, She ordered me to come again to see you. 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. And She ordered me to the top of the little hill where had seen Her before, to cut different flowers up there; Castilian roses. And when I had cut them, I took them down to Her at the bottom; and She took them with Her holy hands, again She placed them in the hollow of my tilma (cuexäntli), so that I would bring them to you, so I would give them only to you. 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. When I reached the top of the hill I saw that it was now paradise.

Every kind 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. 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 should see the sign that you were asking for in order to carry our Her beloved will. And so that it will be clear that my word, my message, is truth. Here

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they are; please receive them." And then he held out his white tilma, in the hollow of which he had placed the flowers. And just as all the different Castilian roses fell out upon the floor, 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, where it is preserved in Her beloved little house, in Her sacred little house at Tepeyac, which is called Guadalupe.

And as soon as the Governing Bishop and all those who were there saw it, they knelt, they were full of awe and reverence. They stood up to see it, they became sad, they wept, and their hearts and minds were then in ecstasy. And the Governing Bishop weeping and with sadness begged and asked Her to forgive him for not having immediately carried out Her will, Her holy breath, Her holy word. And when he got up, he untied Juan Diego's garment, his tilma, from his neck where it was tied, and on which the Queen of Heaven appeared, on which She became the sign. And then he took it and placed it in his private chapel. And Juan Diego still stayed for the day in the Bishop's house, he still kept him there. 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." People were immediately invited to make it, to build it.

□ Chapter 7: The Story of Uncle Juan Bernardino

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; 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 whom the Queen of Heaven had told him had already been cured. But they didn't let him go alone, rather people went with him to his house. And when they arrived they saw that his uncle was now healthy; he had absolutely no pain of any kind. And he, for his part, was greatly surprised by the way in which his nephew was accompanied and very honored. He asked his nephew why it was that they were honoring him so much; and he told him



how, when he left to go call a priest for him who would confess him and prepare him, the Lady of Heaven appeared to him there at Tepeyac. And She sent him to Mexico City to see the Governing Bishop, so that he would make Her a house at Tepeyac. And how She told him not to worry, because his uncle was now happy, and She consoled him very much with this news. His uncle told him that it was true, that She healed him at that exact moment. And he saw Her in exactly the same way She had appeared to his nephew. And She told him that She was also sending him to Mexico City to see the bishop, and also that when he went to see him, he should reveal absolutely everything to him, he should tell him what he had seen and the marvelous way in which She had healed him, and that he would properly name Her beloved Image thus: the Perfect Virgin, Holy Mary of Guadalupe.

And then they brought Juan Bernardino into the presence of the Governing Bishop, they brought him to speak with him, to give his testimony. And together with his nephew Juan Diego, the Bishop lodged them in his house for a few days. While the sacred little house of the lovely Little Queen was built out there at Tepeyac, where She revealed Herself to Juan Diego. And the Reverend Bishop moved the beloved Image of the Beloved Heavenly Maiden to the principal church. 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. And absolutely this entire city with no exception, was deeply moved as everyone came to see and admire Her precious Image. They came to acknowledge its divine character, and they came to offer Her their petitions. They marveled at the miraculous manner it had appeared, granted that no man on earth had painted Her beloved image.

The text stops here, although other, later traditions tell us that Juan Diego eventually moved to the new shrine, where he spent the rest of his life as a caretaker. We learn little more of the Bishop or of Uncle Juan Bernardino or of the roses, and the Virgin does not reappear once she has her shrine.