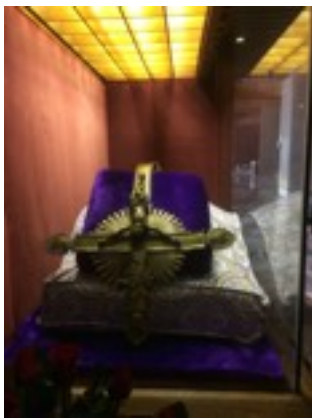


## Our Lady of Guadalupe [My visit to Mexico City]

Guadalupe is the story of great compassion of the Blessed Virgin for the Aztec people. Aztec practiced idolatry and human sacrifices. They believed sun, moon and forces of nature were in constant battle with each other and to appease their fury their priests sacrificed multitude of human beings. In 1519 Spaniard Cortez conquered Mexico for Spain and Franciscan missionaries arrived to evangelize Mexico. Many were reluctant to convert to Christianity because it would require them to abandon polygamy. In December 9, 1531 Juan Diego who became a Christian was on his way to morning Mass, walking past the Tepeyac hill, heard a voice calling his name; he found himself in the presence of a beautiful young woman, whose garments shone like sun. The Blessed Mother wanted a church to be built there to show her love for the people. The bishop of Mexico city Zumarrag wanted a sign from Our Lady to verify the genuineness of the appearance of the Blessed Virgin. Juan Diego was asked by our Lady to collect roses in his tilma [unusual in winter] from Tepeyac hill which turned into a miraculous image of the virgin in the presence of the bishop. News of the miracle spread quickly and millions of native Indians became Christians. The burden of fear and human sacrifice was lifted from the people by the intervention of the Blessed Mother. The miraculous image of our Lady is placed above the alter in the Basilica of Guadalupe. In 1921 during Mexican revolution a bomb went off near the alter, the bronze cross in the sanctuary was bent due to its impact [see in the picture] and the image of our Lady was unharmed. I found the image of Blessed Mother very mystical and eyes full of compassion. I thanked Jesus for giving us his mother who is great comfort and hope for all who suffer and a guiding light for all who seek Jesus. I offered roses and prayers for all of you at this sacred place. A pilgrimage to Guadalupe would sure rejuvenate faith.



*Father Jose*