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# SCOTTSDALE CHURCH'S STAINED GLASS TELLS 'MIRACLE OF THE ROSES' STORY

*Scottsdale Republic, December 12, 2006*

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Every Christmas season, from the late 1940s to the 1970s, Scottsdale hosted a parade that re-enacted what's called the "Miracle of the Roses."

This beautiful story was particularly well-known among families of Mexican heritage. It emphasizes the importance of faith.

The actual event itself took place in December 1531 on a hill called Tepeyac, northeast of Mexico City. A young peasant boy named Juan Diego was attracted by the sounds of singing birds. As the story goes, the birds suddenly went silent, and Juan saw a resplendent vision of a woman who identified herself as the Virgin Mary.

She addressed him tenderly, telling him to go to the Bishop of Mexico and tell him of her wish that a church be built on the hill where they both stood. From that place, she would make known her love and compassion. She would aid and protect her people.

He took the message to Bishop Juan de Zumarraga's palace, but his servants denied him an audience. As is so often the case today, Juan left a message. On his second try, he was allowed to share the Virgin's request in person.

The bishop questioned him in detail, but he didn't believe what Juan told him. He asked him for a sign, proof that what he had said was really true.

Juan left discouraged, only to be delayed further by an uncle who had become mortally ill. The next day he returned to the hill of Tepeyac and was told by the Virgin that his

uncle's health would be restored. She then directed him to the top of the hill, where he found "every kind of precious Spanish flower" imaginable.

He brought the flowers to the Virgin. She placed them in a cloak and told him to take them to the Bishop of Mexico. When Bishop Zumarraga saw the flowers, he fell to his knees, asked forgiveness, and immediately prepared to build a church at Tepeyac. Later, when Juan arrived home, he found his uncle's good health had returned.

For almost a quarter-century, local men and women gathered at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, on Brown Street near downtown Scottsdale, to re-enact the Miracle of the Roses story. They walked from the old mission church to Scottsdale High School's auditorium stage, where the re-enactment pageant took place. After 1956, when the pageant ceremony was over, everyone paraded from the high school to the "new" Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church for refreshments.

The pageant and nighttime parade were choreographed by Jesus Corral, Paul Coze and Patricia Benton Evans. A great deal of planning, practice, special costumes and hard work went into this holiday production.

Unfortunately, over the years, due to increased traffic congestion, the advancing ages of those who performed in the pageant and for other reasons, the annual re-enactment of the Miracle of the Roses eventually disappeared from Scottsdale's local Christmas scene.

If you visit the small chapel off the main



sanctuary of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, at Miller Road and Second Street, you can see the story of the Miracle of the Roses illustrated on its stained-glass windows.

*The Mirror of the Roses story is beautifully illustrated in stained glass in the small chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church at Miller Road and Second Street.*



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