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Saturday, January 15, 2005



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Arizona churches to be first to display religious relics on tour

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MESA, Ariz. (AP) -- Fragments of items that Christ is believed to have touched some 2,000 years ago are coming to various Catholic churches around Arizona next month.

The Arizona Knights of Columbus is coordinating the state's portion of the "Relics of the Passion Tour."

Scheduled items will include a sliver of wood from the cross on Calvary, a piece of wood from the table of the Last Supper in the Upper Room, a fragment of a thorn from the "crown of thorns" put on Christ's head as he hung on the cross, a nail containing steel shavings from an original nail that held Christ on the cross and a fragment of the exterior wrapping of the famed Shroud of Turin in which Christ's body was wrapped.

The relics were originally from Catholic museums and shrines in Rome. They will be on a six-state tour during the season of Lent, starting with Arizona on Feb. 10-13.

Selected churches in Phoenix, Chandler, Goodyear, Nogales, Green Valley and Tucson will have the religious relics on display for people to see.

The items are made available through the Apostolate for Holy Relics, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization under the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Many of the physical items of Christ's last days were taken, in the 4th century, from Jerusalem to Rome by St. Helen, mother of the Roman emperor Constantine after her conversion to Christianity.

A similar relics tour in St. Louis and Washington last year drew tens of thousands, spurred by the film "The Passion of The Christ."

Information from: East Valley Tribune/Scottsdale Tribune, <http://www.aztrib.com>

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