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The Tilma of Tepayac Tour



Thousands of the faithful are expected to turn out in cities around the U.S. as The Tilma of Tepeyac Tour brings a piece of St. Juan Diego's tilma—the cloth that holds the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe—to more than a dozen dioceses around the country

Scheduled to run from May to December 2003, the tour is being organized by the Apostolate for Holy Relics (AHR), a non-profit corporation based in Los Angeles that is dedicated to educating the public about the saints and preserving important pieces of Catholic heritage.

"We hope that this pilgrimage will give those people who cannot go on pilgrimage to Mexico City an opportunity to share in the graces and blessings bestowed by Our Lady of Guadalupe," said AHR vice president Andrew Walther, who added his wish that the tour would promote devotion to the Virgin, "especially through devotion to the rosary in this year proclaimed by the pope to be the Year of the Rosary," and to Juan Diego, canonized last July by Pope John Paul II in a ceremony attended by more than 5 million people.

The relic—the only known segment ever detached from the original tilma—is a small piece that was detached from Juan Diego's cloak and given to Archbishop John Cantwell of Los Angeles by the Archbishop of Mexico City, Luis María Martínez, in 1941 as a gift commemorating Archbishop Cantwell's visit to Mexico City that year.

Both Cantwell's visit and the gift of the relic were meant to symbolize the deep ties that existed between the peoples of Mexico City and Los Angeles, even then home to the largest population of Mexicans outside of Mexico City. Exhibited draped over a 17th century statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the relic has been in the archives of the L.A. archdiocese under the care of Msgr. Francis Weber since 1981.

The faithful believe that the image on the cloak was miraculously created by the Virgin Mary in 1531. The image—which continues to baffle scientists—is now the most recognizable religious symbol in Latin America, and devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe is a favorite of Catholics throughout the Americas. More than 20 million people visit her shrine in Mexico City every year.



Cardinal Roger Mahony has authorized the loan of the relic to the AHR until December 8, 2003. The tour will open in Denver's Immaculate Conception Cathedral on May 30, and will end at New York City's Cathedral of St. Patrick on December 7. Other stops will include the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., and the cathedrals in Palm Beach, Dallas and Detroit.

The tour is being co-sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council in New Haven, Connecticut. Family Rosary in Easton, Massachusetts, is providing rosaries for each veneration. For more information, visit www.relictour.org.

Source: HispanicOnline.com. For more information see: http://www.hispaniconline.com/lstyles/guadalupe_relic_tour.html

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