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NEWS



Wednesday January 27, 2016

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Pope Francis' trip to Mexico Feb. 12-17 will include a pilgrimage to pray before Our Lady of Guadalupe, one of the most famous and popular shrines in the world.

Here are 10 things to know about the shrine before his visit, from the University of Dayton's Marian Library, recognized internationally as a source of expert information on the Virgin Mary:

1. Our Lady of Guadalupe is a life-size **image** of the Virgin Mary that miraculously appeared on a peasant's cloak in 1531 in Mexico.

- 2.** It is one of the most famous shrines in the world. Every year, 20 million people visit the Basilica of Guadalupe where the cloth is displayed. An estimated 3 million pilgrims visit on Dec. 12, her feast day.
- 3.** Tradition says the Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego, a Nahua peasant and Christian convert, on Dec. 9, 1531, on the hill of Tepeyac. She spoke to him in the Nahuatl language and directed him to ask the bishop to erect a sanctuary at the foot of the hill. The bishop, however, wanted proof of her appearance.
- 4.** The Virgin Mary appeared again to Juan Diego on Dec. 12, 1531, and instructed him to pick roses from the barren hill. Diego put the flowers in his tilma, or cloak. When he opened the cloak before the bishop, the portrait of Mary appeared on it.
- 5.** Pope Francis will celebrate Mass in the Basilica of Guadalupe on Saturday, Feb. 13. "It would be unthinkable that the Pope would go to Mexico and not visit Guadalupe," said the Rev. Thomas Thompson, S.M., of the Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute at the University of Dayton and an expert on Mary.
- 6.** The church approved the apparition in 1555. Our Lady of Guadalupe was solemnly crowned Queen of the Mexican people in the name of Pope Leo XIII in 1895. She's also regarded as "the Mother of the Americas." Juan Diego was canonized in 2002 by Pope John Paul II.
- 7.** The Virgin identified herself to Diego as "the one who crushes the serpent" in his native language, which sounded like "Guadalupe" to the Spanish friars who gave it that name.
- 8.** The cloak **survived** 17th century floods in Mexico City and was undamaged by a bomb explosion. The colors have not faded over time and the cactus cloth remains intact although such material typically lasts fewer than 20 years.
- 9.** The image is regarded as a message from heaven loaded **with symbols**, such as a maternity band around Mary's waist, signaling the birth of someone yet to come.
- 10.** The University of Dayton's **All About Mary** website brings together centuries of information on all aspects of the Virgin Mary, including more on the Guadalupe story, symbolism and her significance to Mexico and the Catholic Church.

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