



Marian Congress examines the message and image of Guadalupe

Order hosts first International Marian Congress dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe



Msgr. Eduardo Chávez, postulator of the cause for canonization of St. Juan Diego, delivers one of several presentations on the Guadalupan event during the first International Marian Congress dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Aug. 6-8, in Phoenix.

The appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Juan Diego was a pivotal moment that changed the history of an entire hemisphere, said Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson, who delivered the first presentation at a Knights of Columbus-sponsored Marian Congress in Phoenix, Aug. 6-8. The congress, which preceded a Guadalupe Festival, featured talks by experts from the United States and Latin America on Our Lady of Guadalupe.

More than 1,000 Knights, their families and area Catholics attended the congress, which commenced shortly after the closing of the 127th Supreme Convention on Thursday, Aug. 6. Co-sponsored by the Diocese of Phoenix and the Institute of Guadalupan Studies, the event was part of the Knights' efforts to underline the Catholic character of the

Western hemisphere, a character that stems from the appearance of the Blessed Virgin in 1531.

Presented as the first International Marian Congress dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, the program continued on Friday and Saturday with academic conferences on the image of Guadalupe, a Marian art show and the screening of a film about the Guadalupan event. On Saturday afternoon, a Guadalupe Festival of prayer, song, dance and witness talks was held at the Jobing.com Arena (see "Guadalupe Festival," this page).

A small piece of St. Juan Diego's *tilma* (or cloak) was on display throughout the congress and festival. The only known relic of the *tilma* in the United States, it was generously loaned from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

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Guadalupe Festival Transcends Cultures, Borders



A man dressed in an Indian costume participates in a performance of Matachines dancers and drummers at the Guadalupe Festival, which was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus following the Supreme Convention.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE and the *tilma* of St. Juan Diego took center stage, literally, before thousands of Catholics at the Guadalupe Festival, Aug. 8. The festival concluded a week of events sponsored by the Knights of Columbus in Phoenix, starting with the Order's 127th Supreme Convention and continuing with the first International Marian Congress on Our Lady of Guadalupe.

"Our Lady of Guadalupe points us to her son, but she also points us to unity in her son."

The Jobing.com Arena, which seats more than 16,000, was filled to capacity as people of all ages and many ethnic backgrounds came to enjoy an afternoon of song, dance, prayer and testimonies. The focal point of the event, though, was the procession of the *tilma* relic, a small piece of Juan Diego's cloak that is nor-

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A MESSAGE FOR ALL TIMES

Opening the congress, Anderson explained that the apparition and indelible image of Guadalupe helped convert millions of indigenous Mexicans to the Catholic faith. Yet, the message of Our Lady is still relevant today.

“It is a call to respect all life, in any condition, born and unborn,” he said. “If [Our Lady] could heal the divide between Aztec and Spaniard, she can heal the rifts on our continent today.”

Msgr. Eduardo Chávez, postulator of the cause for canonization of St. Juan Diego and the foremost expert on the Guadalupan event, spoke about the significance of Our Lady of Guadalupe’s appearance in 1531. He said that when Pope John Paul II canonized Juan Diego in 2002, he did not simply elevate a new saint — the pope also confirmed by his infallible authority the truth about the apparitions and the message of Guadalupe.

By holding the Marian Congress, and promoting devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Knights of Columbus are “the modern Juan Diegos for everybody in the world,” Msgr. Chávez said.



A relic of St. Juan Diego's *tilma* (or cloak) hangs on a 17th-century statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe during Mass. The relic was on display throughout the Marian Congress and Guadalupe Festival in Phoenix, Aug. 6-8.

'LITTLENES AND SIMPLICITY'

On Friday morning, Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix celebrated the Votive Mass of St. Juan Diego. Drawing on natural images common to the Arizona landscape, Bishop Olmsted compared the saint to a “pincushion cactus,” which is so

small that its flower hides the body of the cactus in springtime. Unlike the huge saguaro cactus, which can grow up to 50 feet tall, the pincushion catches the attention of passersby with its diminutive beauty.

Such “littleness and simplicity” was the key to St. Juan Diego’s service

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mally enshrined in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. The relic was encased in a reliquary and draped by a chain over a 17th-century statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe that remained on the arena’s center stage throughout the event.

The arena was also filled with an atmosphere of fun and celebration. An international array of performers including Alexander Acha, Dana and Filippa Giordano inspired the crowd with musical tributes to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

A colorful highlight was also the drumming and performance of Matachines dancers, who were dressed in the traditional garb of native Mexicans.

Speakers included actor Eduardo Verástegui, star of the film *Bella*, Immaculée Ilibagiza, a survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix. Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson delivered an address on the

significance of Our Lady of Guadalupe with regard to the changing face of America.

“We might think of Hispanics in the Church in terms of the mythical phoenix,” said Anderson. “Nearly 500 years after Our Lady of Guadalupe’s transformation of this hemisphere, our Hispanic brothers and sisters represent the rebirth of Catholicism in the United States. Our Lady of Guadalupe points us to her son, but she also points us to unity in her son. For Catholics this unity must transcend borders.”

The festival concluded with an international rosary, with prayers read in languages from throughout the world. Meditations on the mysteries of light were shared by prominent Catholics from the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Philippines.

“In Spanish, to give birth is referred to as “dar a luz” — to bring to the light,” said Anderson during his address. “Truly this is the history of our hemisphere. Our Lady of Guadalupe brought to the light



International recording star Dana, who is also a former member of the European Parliament, performs at the Guadalupe Festival, Aug. 8.

Catholicism in our hemisphere, and brought the people of this land to the light of her son. May she bring to the light a new unity among all her people.” ❖



A man takes notes during a morning session of the Marian Congress in Phoenix

to God and his mother, Our Lady of Guadalupe, said Bishop Olmsted. "Because he was humble, he was able to put aside his own affairs and respond to Our Lady's call."

As the congress reconvened, Msgr. Chávez continued his presentation on Mary's apparition and the full meaning of the message given to Juan Diego.

"The Aztecs had taken the heart and blood of human victims to feed the gods of their religion. Now, Holy Mary of Guadalupe was showing them the real sacrifice in the blood of Jesus Christ," Msgr. Chávez said. "She is saying you don't kill victims to feed gods, but the Son of God will give you his own flesh and blood in the Eucharist, to nourish you with eternal life."

"Because Juan Diego was humble, he was able to put aside his own affairs and respond to Our Lady's call."

The Aztecs were sad and fatalistic after the Spanish conquerors took away their altars of sacrifice and smashed their temples. In requesting a shrine of her own, Mary was asking her followers to establish a new civilization in the heart of the New World.

"This would be a civilization of love for all people," Msgr. Chávez said. "This is still the time of the new civilization. We still need to build this civilization in obedience to the request of the Mother of God."

AN INSPIRATION TO ALL

Talks continued later that day and into the next, highlighted by a presentation by Dr. José Aste Tonsmann. A civil engineer with a doctorate from Cornell University, Tonsmann used digital image processing to examine the unique nature of the Guadalupe image.

Using methods that he learned at Mexico's IBM Scientific Center, Tonsmann famously discovered 13 human figures in the corneas of the Guadalupe image. He believes that these figures correspond to the people who were present when Juan Diego presented his *tilma* to Bishop Juan Zumárraga in 1531.

On Saturday, Supreme Chaplain Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., celebrated Mass and delivered a homily about his memorable visits to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. He also spoke about how Our Lady's image is an enduring sign, past and present, in good times and bad.

"My faith was strengthened," said Bishop Lori, "as I stood with people from all over the world who had come to gaze up at the countenance of Our Lady, to listen to her message, and to pray to her in their hour of need for themselves and for their families."

Finally, and in anticipation of what was sure to be a grand *fiesta*, Supreme Knight Anderson closed the congress with remarks about building the civilization of love.

He said, "Let us grow in faith. It is up to us to take Our Lady's message to all people; it is up to us to ensure that the future of this continent is one of hope and one of love."

Anderson and Msgr. Chávez also made available their new book, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love* (Doubleday), to congress and festival attendees. Proceeds from the book, which further develops the themes discussed at the congress, will be donated to Knights of Columbus Charities. ❖

Order mourns death of Eunice Kennedy Shriver

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS everywhere mourn the passing of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, co-founder of Special Olympics and an ardent supporter of people with disabilities. Shriver died Aug. 11 after suffering a series of strokes. She was 88.

Eunice and her husband, Sargent Shriver, who is a member of Mater Dei Council 9774 in Rockville, Md., established Special Olympics in 1968. The Order's support of, and involvement in, Special Olympics began more than 40 years ago when Knights assisted at the inaugural event at Soldier Field in Chicago.

Eunice Shriver's personal dedication to transforming society's view of people with intellectual disabilities inspired generations of Knights. Councils at the grassroots level have volunteered millions of hours to Special Olympics events and fundraisers.

"I don't think there's any organization in the country that has given so much in personal help and in financial support to Special Olympics," Eunice said of the Knights in 1987.

In a statement following her death, Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson said, "Eunice Shriver's attitude to Special Olympics and to all of the causes that she pursued was distinctively Catholic, and the depth of her faith, which she shared with her husband throughout their lives together, has been an inspiration to every Knight." ❖



Supreme Knight and Mrs. Carl A. Anderson with Eunice Kennedy Shriver at the White House in 2006.



A Cure for the 'Vocationally Disturbed'

BY THOMAS P. SMITH JR.
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
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In the business of recruiting agents, we often talk to our general agents about finding people who are "vocationally disturbed." That's a fancy way of saying we want people who are unhappy, uncomfortable or otherwise not pleased with their current job.

During the best of times, we know there are a number of men in this condition: men who work in a "family business" that doesn't belong to their family; men who have maxed out on compensation but are doing

more work; men who are part of companies where the workforce has been reduced, and who are now doing two or three jobs, while waiting for the next round of layoffs.

Today, we are not living in the best economic circumstances. And while I pray that no member of the Order is affected by this crisis, I know better. It's a fact of life.

To anyone reading this who may be in a stressful employment position, I can offer you a conversation about the future. We don't ask for a commitment, nor do we offer one. We do offer the opportunity to sit and talk with someone about the possibility of a career as a Knights of Columbus field agent. Before you dismiss this, understand that most of our agents have never sold life insurance products before we hired them. While your first reaction may be that such a career is "not for me," I urge you to think again.

You control your own destiny, changing people's lives for good with no limit in compensation. There are no layoffs; there is a protected market. Moreover, there is the chance to blend your faith and your work — we open all of our business meetings with a prayer. There is also full training at your location, at our headquarters in New Haven, Conn., and online. This really could be the opportunity you have been looking for.

As I said, we will not sign a contract with you on day one. We have a process we go through, beginning with an informal initial interview. We won't put you in the position if we don't think you can succeed.

So if you are feeling a little "vocationally disturbed" these days, drop me an e-mail, and I will have someone call you. It's just a conversation. E-mail messages come directly to me at thomas.smith@kofc.org. I look forward to hearing from you. ❖