

THE GUARDIAN

Newsletter of the International Crusade for Holy Relics, USA



Recent and Upcoming Events

September 1-3, 2006

“Great Men & Women of the Spirit” Relic Display at the SCRC Renewal Convention. Anaheim, California.

The IHCR displayed the relics of eight saints and blessed for public veneration.

Saturday, September 23, 2006

Feast of San Gennaro (St. Januarius)

1651 N. Highland Ave. Hollywood, 90028.
The Procession is Sat. 9/23 @ 12:00pm with the Mass following from 1pm-2pm.
The First-class relic of the Saint will located in a tent by the Main Stage area.

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FOUNDER'S MESSAGE Thomas J. Serafin

What is the contribution that the saints have made to the history of humankind? Sometimes when searching for an answer we find one, and really can't and don't need to improve upon it. In "The Horizon History of Christianity" - ©1964, a section written by the editors seems to be a fitting answer to the above stated question.

The history of Christianity is inseparable from the history of western culture and of western society. For almost a score of centuries Christian beliefs, principals, and ideas have colored the thoughts and feelings of western man. The traditions and practices that have grown out of the Christian experience has left an indelible impress not only on developments of purely religious interest, whatever truly little endeavor of man. This has been manifest in art and literature, science and a law, politics and economics, and, as well, and love and war. Indeed, the indirect and unconscious influence of Christianity has often exercised on avowedly secular manners – social, intellectual, and institutional - affords striking proof of the dynamic forces that have been generated by the fate over the millenniums. Even those who have contested its claims and rejects its tenants have been affected by what they opposed. Whether our beliefs, all of us today are inevitably heirs to this abundant legacy; and it is impossible to understand the cultural heritage that sustains and conditions our lives without considering the contributions of Christianity.

Jesus' brief ministry, his execution on the cross, and the records of his resurrection attracted no immediate interest outside the small, troubled Roman province where they occurred. In the larger world through which the apostles traveled with their message of the Christ, a wide variety of cults were vigorously competing for religious loyalty among the conglomerate population of the Roman Empire. It

was an age when men were awakening to the needs of moral and social reform nation. Christianity one it's ultimate victory because, very simply stated, it met the need more effectively than any other movement of the age. The ideals of the Christian brotherhood, of the equality of all believers before God, and the vision of a new social order appealed to the masses of people of every class and every race. The obvious ethical power of Christianity and its philosophical import as expounded by the early apologists appealed to the intellectuals of the classical world. To all men it offered the hope of eternal salvation. These fundamental aspects of the new religion, grounded in the teachings and example of Jesus, were to sustain Christian endeavor over the long centuries to come

Since the death of Christ his followers have known vicissitude as well as glory and authority. The Christian religion has suffered periods of persecution and critical divisions within its own ranks. It has been the cause and the victim of war and strife. It has assumed forms of astonishing variety. It has been confronted by revolutionary changes in human and social outlooks and subjected to searching criticism. The culture of our own time, indeed, has been termed the most completely secularized form of culture the world has ever known. We live in what some have called the post-Christian age. Yet wherever we turn to enrich our lives, we continue to encounter the lasting historical realities of the Christian experience and tradition.

This is good insight as to who the saints were, who the saints are, and what they contributed.

JUST ASK

RELICS. Can science prove authenticity?

Serafin: Dr. Vedeckis, is it possible to scientifically validate the authenticity of a relic through Carbon 14 testing or DNA?

Vedeckis: Carbon 14 dating provides a reasonable time span for the age of an object. There are problems however. It is a destructive technique, and its accuracy depends upon the size of the sample tested – the larger the sample, the more accurate the result. Also, contamination of the relic in later years can influence the results. The fire that scorched the Shroud of Turin and the water that contacted it can give a false younger “age” to the item, because of the introduction of “younger” carbon atoms. Carbon dating can give a range for the age of a relic (within 60-100 years), but cannot absolutely prove its authenticity.

Serafin: Are there any other current tests available, like the ones used to identify the Romanov remains?

Vedeckis: - Current tests are limited. DNA tests

performed on the Romanov remains only worked because they had known samples from other family members for comparison. As in forensic medicine, you can determine that the probability of a sample coming from someone unrelated is extremely low. DNA testing could be used on first class relics of fairly recent saints, if, for example, there is a living relative to which to compare the results. Again, this is a destructive technique, and you need to have a fairly large sample for accuracy. If you had well-preserved remains from ancient saints, you could determine that the remains were human, and maybe the sex, race, and ethnicity of the person, but that is about all.

Serafin: In the case of believing whether a relic is real or not, can science replace faith?

Vedeckis: No. Science can provide objective methods to support the claim about the authenticity of a relic, but it cannot “prove” that it is genuine. Faith is indispensable.

Wayne V. Vedeckis Ph.D. is the Amgen Professor of Oncology in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, New Orleans, LA.

“Science cannot prove that [a relic] is genuine...faith is indispensable.”

Q & A Readers' and Internet Visitors' Questions Answered

QUESTION:

Are relics received and venerated without proof that they are genuine?

ANSWER:

No. The Catholic Church is very prudent in this matter, and her law declares that those relics alone may be publicly venerated which have authentic documents accompanying them, proving them genuine. These documents can be given only by one authorized by the Holy See to grant them. If the document is lost, no relic may be offered for public veneration by the faithful without a special decree from a Bishop who can guarantee the relic as genuine. But even should a Catholic venerate as a relic some object which is not authentic, such veneration is at least well meant, and directed towards the one whom the object is believed to represent.

QUESTION:

Is there proof [of the veneration of relics] in the Sacred Scriptures?

ANSWER:

Here are some relevant verses:

Old Testament

Exodus. XIII, 19
4 Kings XIII, 21
Ecclus. XLIX, 18
2 Kings, XIII, 20-21

New Testament

Matt. IX, 20
Acts V, 15-16
Acts IXX, 11-12

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Marytown: Hidden Treasure

by Chris Winkelmann

In the far Northern suburbs of Chicago lies quiet Libertyville, Illinois. Once a small town, it is becoming ever more cosmopolitan as the Chicagoland expands further and further. Many visit Libertyville to view its trendy main street—an updated slice of vintage Americana with boutiques and brewpubs. However, there is a very important reason for the Catholic pilgrim to make a detour through Libertyville, or even make it a main stop: Marytown.

Marytown has several different roles. First, it is a Conventual Franciscan friary attached to the St. Bonaventure province. In 2000 it was designated by as the National Shrine of St. Maximilian



Kolbe. It features the moving Kolbe/Holocaust exhibit, which displays the life of St. Maximilian, the horrors of the holocaust, and the great saint's final heroic act. Marytown also serves as the national headquarters of the movement he founded, the Militia Immaculata. (See www.consecration.com.) Finally, it is a major Catholic retreat and conference center.

The heart of Marytown is the Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. Modeled after St. Paul's outside the Walls in Rome, this chapel masterfully combines ornate architecture and rich religious symbolism. Among its treasures are elaborate mosaics depicting different conventual Franciscan saints, including four from the life of St. Maximilian Kolbe. A fifth shows this martyr of charity rising triumphantly from the starvation bunker; at eleven feet tall it occupies an entire wall of the Passion/Kolbe chapel. The other side chapel, dedicated is dedicated Sorrowful mother. Paintings of the Seven Sorrows of Mary contribute to its solemn serenity.

The Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel was originally designed by the Benedictine Sisters as a perpetual exposition chapel, and it continues to be such today. Adoration of the Most Holy Eucharist has taken place here day and night, without interruption, since June 7, 1928. The entire chapel is constructed to reflect the glory of the Blessed Sacrament. The focal point of the entire chapel is a five-foot tall golden ostensorium housing inside it the inestimable treasure, Christ Incarnate. This monstrance is made entirely of donated jewelry, and is so intri-



cate that its design and decoration is the subject of its own article (see www.marytown.org/monstrance.html). The chapel's main purpose is further belied by its artwork: there are 99 separate Eucharistic symbols bordering the chapels windows, panels containing many different titles for the Blessed Sacrament, and three Eucharistic mosaics behind the main altar.

The chapel is also of great interest for those wishing to view and venerate relics. The relics of about 100 saints are respectfully displayed on wall-mounted reliquaries. They are carefully labeled and arranged in the traditional groupings—apostles, martyrs, priests, virgins, confessors, etc. Many devotees of relics aren't familiar with this large collection, and it is definitely worth checking out. But the most famous relics at Marytown are those of St. Maximilian Kolbe.



First class relic of St. Maximilian Kolbe, and his breviary (second class relic.)

According to Marytown's Brother Paschal :

"We have a first class relic of St. Maximilian Kolbe, a piece of his beard. As you know he was cremated in Auschwitz so first class relics of him are very rare. Before he was arrested Fr. Maximilian went to the Brother barber in Niepokalanow for a trim. The Brother saved his whiskers in a napkin. Fr. Kolbe noticed this and told the Brother to put the napkin in the furnace. He did as he was asked. Then Fr. Kolbe left the shop and the Brother took out the whiskers because the furnace was not lit. These are the only first class relics of the saint."

Marytown also offers six outdoor shrines on its beautiful grounds, including a Rosary meditation garden, and stations of the cross.

Group and individual retreats are welcome; accommodation and meals can be arranged. Suggested devotional activities include veneration of the relics, liturgy of the hours with the friars, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, benediction, and of course, the sacraments.

For more information about Marytown, including a free DVD, visit www.marytown.org, or call 847-367-7831.



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The goal of the International Crusade for Holy Relics goal is to create an opportunity for the education and public veneration of the remains of the saints. By this method, the faithful and curious alike have the occasion to become aware of the lives and legends of the saints, their life struggles, their trials and tribulations, and the holy perseverance that was the pathway to Heaven. It is very apparent that this ministry can keep the saints alive in the hearts and minds of the faithful while catechizing and evangelizing the faithful and curious are like.

As a answer to a need in the Catholic community the ICHRusa has been reorganized to address the issue of the education of primary and secondary school children. It is our goal to return the remains of our Christian saints to the lofty station they so rightly deserve. We have combined a vast relic treasury and a desire to connect Heaven to Earth through education and veneration. This historic endeavor is the first time in history that a traveling exhibit of religious relics and catechism program has been assembled for the glory of God, the Communion of Saints, and the faithful.

Meet the New *Guardian* Editor

The International Crusade for Holy Relics is pleased to introduce the new editor of *The Guardian*, IHCR member Christopher L. Winkelmann. Chris is committed to increasing the intercession of the saints by the Catholic faithful. He would particularly like to spread devotion to his patron, St. Louis IX of France, and has written a chaplet to him. Chris also is devoted to the cause of canonization of several holy people, including: Fr. Michael McGiveney, Bl. Miguel Pro, and Bl. Nuño Alvarez de Pereira.

A life-long St. Louis resident, Chris works as a securities trader, and is studying for a MBA/MS Finance from Webster University. He is a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish. Besides his employment and studies, Chris keeps busy participating in the IHCR, Archdiocesan Pro-Life, and the Knights of Columbus. In 2005, he was knighted in the Royal Order of St. Michael of the Wing by Dom Duarte, Duke of Bragança, head of the Royal House of Portugal.

Chris hopes to spread the New Evangelization through the IHCR by promoting the lives of the saints and the imitation of their sanctity.

Q & A (con't. from page 2)

QUESTION:

Were the early saints aware of the importance of relics?

ANSWER:

St. Ambrose relates how a blind man was restored to sight when the newly found bodies of Sts. Gervasius & Protasius were taken to the basilica, and adds: "You know, nay you have seen with your own eyes, how many were delivered from demons and a great number were cured of diseases when they touched the garments of the Saints; how there was a repetition of the miracles of the early days when, in consequence of the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, abundant grace was showered down upon the earth."

St. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "This holy wood of the Cross is still to be seen among us; and through the agency of those who piously took home particles thereof, it has filled the whole earth."

St. Chrysostom tells how men and women used to wear articles of the Cross in golden lockets on the necks.

St. Augustine says, "we have not erected an altar to the martyr, Stephen, but with the relics of the martyr Stephen have erected an altar to God."
