

# WORLD & NATION

## Guatemalan, Mexican canonization rites set

GUATEMALA CITY (CNS) — A planned visit to Guatemala and Mexico by an ailing Pope John Paul II gives added emphasis to the Spanish saying: "Rengo, rengo, pero vengo."

The rhyming idiomatic expression means: "Nothing will stop me from coming to the party." Literally, it means: "I may be limping, but I'll be there."

The July 29-Aug. 1 trip to the two Latin American countries is shaping up as a major spiritual fiesta for the 82-year-old pope, hobbled by arthritic knees and hampered in his speech and motor activities by a Parkinson's-like disease.

The planned visits, coming after July 23-28 World Youth Day ceremonies in Toronto, show the pope's determination to celebrate, with their spiritual descendants, the virtues of people tied to the Catholic histories of both nations.

The pope is scheduled to arrive in Guatemala City the afternoon of July 29 for a Mass the following morning in which he will declare the sainthood of Blessed Pedro de San Jose Betancur, a 17th-century religious known for his healing work.

On July 31 at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, the pope will declare the sainthood of Blessed Juan Diego Cuauhtlatzotzin, the 16th-century Indian who symbolizes the church's evangelization of the native peoples of the New World during the Spanish Conquest.

On Aug. 1, also at the basilica, the pope will beatify the Indian martyrs Juan Bautista and Jacinto de Los Angeles, both killed in 1700. Beatification is a major step toward sainthood.

The papal visit is expected to draw several million pilgrims to the Mexican capital, although only about 50,000 will be allowed into the Basilica of Guadalupe

complex for the canonization Mass; others will be forced to watch it on television.

Health concerns have cut the papal agenda to a minimum, with the originally scheduled private meetings with President Vicente Fox and an assembly with the Mexican bishops' congress cancelled.

Well before the pope's planned arrival, Guatemalans and Mexicans were preparing for the events.

In Guatemala's old capital of Antigua, 15 miles west of the current capital of Guatemala City, officials set up a special schedule to handle the expected influx of pilgrims wanting to visit the Church of San Francisco, where Hermano Pedro, as he is known locally, is interred.

Hermano Pedro (Brother Pedro) is revered throughout Guatemala and Central America for his miraculous curing of the sick and dedication to the poor.

At the Antigua church, the wall above the altar dedicated to Hermano Pedro is filled with plaques thanking him for his help and is tainted black from burning candles. People attributing their cures to him previously left their crutches and other evidence of healings at the altar as signs of gratitude. Now, they are asked to leave items at a museum inside the church.

"Everyone wants to visit the old altar, because that is where miracles are made," said Myrna Arana, an Antigua resident.

Hermano Pedro was born March 19, 1626, in Spain's Canary Islands and arrived in the New World at age 24. He founded the Bethlehemite Brothers and Sisters in 1653 and became known as the "St. Francis of the Americas." One well-known legend says that he would lick the wounds of the sick, a role given to animals at the time.

The papal Mass to canonize Hermano



Reuters/CNS

Traditional dancers perform outside the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City July 21. Indigenous peoples of Mexico are celebrating the upcoming canonization of Nahuatl Indian Juan Diego by Pope John Paul II July 31.

Pedro is planned for July 30 at the Guatemala City race track.

At Mexico's Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the enthusiasm for Juan Diego's canonization began well before the pope's planned arrival.

Among the people making pilgrimages to the basilica in the days leading up to the canonization Mass was Tomas Sanchez, a 70-year-old cook. He asked Juan Diego for improved health.

"I asked him to intervene in my favor before the Virgin and before God," said Sanchez, pointing to his leg swollen with varicose veins.

Sanchez sat on a low wall in the basilica complex built on the site where Juan Diego, a Nahuatl Indian, had four visions of Mary in December 1531, several years after the Spanish conquered what is now Mexico. The visions and Juan Diego's conversion to Catholicism were major spurs to the church's evangelization efforts.

Mexico's bishops said the fact that all

three Mexicans to be honored by the pope are Indians shows the need for Mexico to give legal recognition to the rights of indigenous people.

Mexicans must adopt a new view of indigenous populations as people owed rights and not as "objects of our generosity and beneficence," the bishops said in a July 3 pastoral letter published in the July 15-16 edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican's newspaper.

"Their recognition on the part of the universal church means they are an example that can help us return to the indigenous roots of our people," the bishops said.

The message of Guadalupe also "vindicates the place of the poor and marginalized in the construction of a more just and fraternal nation," they said.

Today, global economic forces sideline a growing number of poor men and women, including indigenous, and seek "to impose the idea that, 'outside of the free market, there is no salvation,'" they added.

## Sinn Fein apologizes for 30 years of civilian casualties

By Cian Molloy  
Catholic News Service

DUBLIN, Ireland — A leading Irish archbishop called the Irish Republican Army's apology for killing civilians during its 30-year military campaign against British rule "a very significant further step" toward peace.

Archbishop Sean Brady of Armagh, Northern Ireland, said the IRA's apology was an encouraging development.

"While it's very understandable that for some this statement does not go far enough, nevertheless it should be welcomed as a very significant further step in meeting the challenges and difficulties, as

the statement acknowledges, in the peace process," the archbishop told reporters at Belfast International Airport, where he was returning from an archdiocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes, France.

The archbishop, primate of all Ireland, said he hopes the IRA's statement contributes to the healing of families affected by its actions.

The IRA said the apology marked the 30th anniversary of "Bloody Friday," July 21, 1972, when more than 20 IRA bombs were detonated across Belfast, killing nine people and injuring more than 130.

"While it was not our intention to injure or kill noncombatants, the reality is that on this and on a number of other occa-

sions, that was the consequence of our actions," the statement said.

The IRA also said it wanted to "acknowledge the grief and pain" of relatives of combatant-victims.

"The process of conflict resolution requires an equal acknowledgment of the grief and loss of others," the statement said.

David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, Northern Ireland's biggest Protestant party, and head of the Northern Ireland coalition government, noted that the apology "said nothing at all about the recent violence that the IRA has been involved in, nothing about what their future conduct is going to be."

Trimble urged British Prime Minister Tony Blair not to cite the statement "as an excuse" to soften diplomatic pressure on Sinn Fein, the IRA's political arm, reported *The Associated Press*.

In October, the IRA began scrapping its weapons stockpiles, a principal goal of the 1998 peace accords. No progress has been confirmed since April.

This year the IRA has been accused of developing new weapons and training anti-American rebels in Colombia, stealing secret police files and compiling new intelligence on potential targets, and overseeing Catholic rioters and shooting at Protestant rioters. Sinn Fein has rejected all these claims.

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