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AMERICA/MEXICO - Nearly 2 million faithful in the procession of Our Lady of Zapopan

Guadalajara (Agenzia Fides) – Nearly 1.8 million faithful, according to estimates by the civil protection of the State of Jalisco, 2 million according to the Archdiocese of Guadalajara, gathered from beginning in the early morning hours in the main streets of Guadalajara to attend the procession of the Virgin of Zapopan, the second largest religious procession in Mexico. The Archdiocese of Guadalajara sent Fides a long description of the religious event.

For four months, the religious image of the Madonna visited the main churches in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara and returned October 12 to her basilica accompanied by a grand procession (in Spanish "Romeria"), which each year attracts Catholics in this state and across the country, coinciding with the commemoration of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus.

For the eight kilometers of its course, "the General" as they call the Virgin of Zapopan, was accompanied by 23,000 dancers dressed in traditional indigenous Indian costumes with feathered headdresses, who with their native dances and songs recalled the first procession of the eighteenth century. Thousands of faithful of all ages made the journey barefoot, to reaffirm their religious fervor and to thank the Virgin of Zapopan for the miracles received.

The celebration, which dates back to about 250 years ago, began on Monday afternoon, October 11, with the Mass and a public celebration in the Cathedral of Guadalajara, located in the historic disctrict, and concluded in the courtyard of the Basilica of Zapopan with a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Juan Sandoval Iñiguez, Archbishop of Guadalajara. In the homily, the Cardinal insisted on the theme of the family and the need to always maintain the concept of the family intact, standing firm against any strange ideas. “The Church has repeated it throughout her 2,000-year history, that marriage should be between a man and a woman. May the faithful keep this clear so that the voices heard in society (e.g. homosexual 'marriage,' etc.) may not penetrate our hearts,” the Cardinal said.

Like every year, 1,000 people spent the night sleeping outdoors near the Cathedral and in the public parks and city squares located along the procession route, to reserve a spot closer to where the image passes by. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 15/10/2010)

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