

Los Angeles cathedral exhibit honors Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Juan Diego

LOS ANGELES (CNS) – An art exhibit honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego currently on display at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles gives “give thanks for the blessings received through Nuestra Morenita and San Juan Diego, as patrons of the arts,” said artist Lalo Garcia.

Specially selected works by Garcia, Laura Vasquez Rodriguez, Rosa Maria Alvarez and Rick Ortega are installed adjacent to the cathedral’s chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe. The chapel houses the only piece of Juan Diego’s “tilma,” or cloak, in the United States. It is from the original cloak in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

The exhibit, which opened Nov. 20 and runs through Dec. 16, celebrates the upcoming feasts of St. Juan Diego, Dec. 9, and Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dec. 12.

“With our artwork we honor the Virgin of Guadalupe, as the patroness of the arts,” said Garcia, whose artwork graces the walls of the cathedral and parish churches throughout the Los Angeles Archdiocese. Born in Michoacan, Mexico, he is the lead artist of the mural of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe overlooking the Hollywood Freeway on the Cathedral Plaza.

In a statement for the opening of special 10-piece exhibit, he noted the work of each artist embodies their testimonies about their subjects, and he invited all who visited the exhibit “to meditate on their own blessings and at the same time, to enjoy the beauty of each one of the pieces.”

Mary, as Our Lady of Guadalupe, appeared to St. Juan Diego on

Tepeyac Hill near modern-day Mexico City. She appeared for the first time at dawn Dec. 9, 1531, and said she wanted a church built in her honor on that hill. He went to the bishop to share this news, but was put off by the prelate.

She appeared again, and Juan Diego – who was called by name by the lady in the apparition – again approached the bishop. The bishop asked for a sign from her and Mary produced enough roses in December to fill Juan Diego's tilma.

When he emptied the cloak and the rose fell in front of the bishop, he found that she had left her image on the tilma, which remains today in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. St. Juan Diego was canonized in 2002. The basilica is the world's most visited Marian shrine.

Besides images of the Virgin of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego, the Los Angeles exhibit features other spiritual and nature images.

Celebrations honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego will take place throughout the archdiocese and at the cathedral. A monthlong spiritual pilgrimage – leading up to the 88th procession and Mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Dec. 1 in East Los Angeles – is visiting 18 designated parishes and two cemeteries. Several activities are planned, including Masses, rosaries, prayer services, veneration and music.

The archdiocese's annual celebration in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be held at the cathedral Dec. 11, the eve of her feast day. There will be traditional dances on the Cathedral Plaza as a tribute to Mary, followed by veneration of a relic of the tilma. The celebration culminates with midnight Mass.