

Our Lady of Guadalupe 'completely beyond' scientific explanation, says researcher

Phoenix, Ariz., Aug 7, 2009 / 04:10 pm (CNA).- Researcher and physicist Dr. Adolfo Orozco told participants at the International Marian Congress on Our Lady of Guadalupe that there is no scientific explanation for the 478 years of high quality-preservation of the Tilma or for the miracles that have occurred to ensure its preservation.

Dr. Orozco began his talk by confirming that the conservation of the Tilma, the cloak of St. Juan Diego on which Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared 478 years ago, "is completely beyond any scientific explanation."

"All the cloths similar to the Tilma that have been placed in the salty and humid environment around the Basilica have lasted no more than ten years," he explained. One painting of the miraculous image, created in 1789, was on display in a church near the basilica where the Tilma was placed. "This painting was made with the best techniques of its time, the copy was beautiful and made with a fabric very similar to that of the Tilma. Also, the image was protected with a glass since it was first placed there."

However, eight years later, the copy of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was thrown away because the colors were fading and threads were breaking. In contrast, Orozco said, "the original Tilma was exposed for approximately 116 years without any kind of protection, receiving all the infrared and ultraviolet radiation from the tens of thousands of candles near it and exposed to the humid and salty air around the temple."

Dr. Orozco then discussed the Tilma's fabric. He noted that "one of the most bizarre characteristics of the cloth is that the back side is rough and coarse, but the front side is 'as soft as the most pure silk, as noted by painters and scientists in 1666, and confirmed one century later in 1751 by the Mexican painter, Miguel Cabrera."

Following an analysis of some of the fibers in 1946, it was concluded that the fibers came from the Agave plant, however, noted Dr. Orozco, the researchers couldn't figure out which of the 175 Agave species the Tilma was made from. Years later, in 1975, "the famous Mexican researcher Ernesto Sodi Pallares said that the species of the agave was Agave popotule Zacc," Orozco explained, "but we don't know how he reached this conclusion."

Before concluding his presentation, Dr. Orozco made mention of two miracles associated with the Tilma.

The first occurred in 1785 when a worker accidentally spilled a 50 percent nitric acid solvent on the right side of the cloth. "Besides any natural explanation, the acid has not destroyed the fabric of the cloth, indeed it has not even destroyed the colored parts of the image," Orozco said.

The second miracle was the explosion of a bomb near the Tilma in 1821. Dr. Orozco recalled that the explosion broke the marble floor and widows 150 meters from the explosion, but "unexpectedly, neither the Tilma nor the normal glass that protected the Tilma was damaged or broken." The only damage near it was a brass crucifix that was twisted by the blast.

He continued, "There are no explanations why the shockwave that broke windows 150 meters afar did not destroy the normal glass that protected the image. Some people said that the Son by means of the brass crucifix protected the image of His Mother. The real fact is that we don't have a natural explanation for this event."

Dr. Orozco thanked the audience for listening to his presentation and closed by reassuring them that "Our Lady visited Mexico 478 years ago, but she remains there to give Her Love, Her Mercy and Her Care to anyone who needs it, and to bring Her Son, Jesus Christ to everyone who receives Him."



Dr. Adolfo Orozco at the International Marian Congress on Our Lady of Guadalupe in Glendale, Arizona.

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