

Silver Rose Run stops at St. Leo's Catholic Church in Inwood

Relay honors Our Lady of Guadalupe

By JOHN McVEY
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

INWOOD — The Running of the Silver Rose came to St. Leo's Catholic Church in Inwood Thursday evening.

The Running of the Silver Rose is in honor of the Lady of Guadalupe, also known as the Virgin of Guadalupe, a vision of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who appeared to Juan Diego, a Mexican peasant, in 1531 on a hillside near Mexico City.

The shrine erected for the Lady of Guadalupe is the most visited sanctuary of the Catholic church. The rose was picked as the symbol of the run because Diego's vision presented him with a bouquet of Castilian roses, which were found only in Spain at that time, to prove she had appeared to him.

Starting in 1960, the Columbian Squires, a branch of the Knights of Columbus for young men, began a relay run using a real rose. The run went from London, Ontario, Canada, through the United States, to Mexico and onto the basilica in Mexico City, where the miracle is celebrated on Dec. 12, the day Diego had his apparition.

The next year, a bronze rose replaced the real rose, which did not fare well over the course of the nearly year-long relay.

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Then a silver rose made of Mexican silver was substituted for the bronze version.

Today, there are three silver roses and three routes —

an eastern, a central and a western route — over which they are carried each year starting in May, explained John J. Lease, chancellor of the Knights of Columbus at St. Leo's.

"One rose goes through the eastern United States, and St. Leo's was chosen to host the rose," he said in a telephone interview Thursday afternoon. "We'll have a little relay on St. Leo's property. It's about one and two-tenths miles. We have about 20 runners."

This is the first time the Running of the Silver Rose will visit St. Leo's, he said.

"It's wonderful — it's an honor to participate," Edita Knepper of Inwood and a member of St. Leo's parish said Thursday evening.

She ran the last leg of the local relay, wearing a T-shirt with the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe on it that she bought at the shrine in Mexico City when she visited there in 2004.

Helgi P. Nelson Sr., a past-Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus in Berkeley Springs, was escorting the rose across the state.

"In the first three days, we were in five different towns," he said. "This is the 12th town. It's been a great trip. We had a group of 27 who ran from Buckhannan to Elkins on U.S. 33. Each ran three miles."

The reason for the international relay is to shed light on Mary and that she has come back many times, Nelson said.

"She reminds us to be civi-

lized," he said.

The history of the Lady of Guadalupe and the Silver Rose were recited in both English and Spanish after the relay. The Knights of Columbus led the rosary followed by mass.

Finally, there was a reception and the rose was displayed for attendees.

According to the Running of the Silver Rose website, the tour through West Virginia began on July 2 with the transfer of the eastern rose at Pittsburgh to the West Virginian contingent.

Other stops in West Virginia have included Follansbee, Wheeling, Fairmont, Clarksburg, Weston, Elkins, Summersville, White Sulphur Springs and Romney, where it was hosted by Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church on Wednesday.

After its stop at St. Leo's, the rose will travel to Keyser, according to the website, and then to Berkeley Springs on Saturday and Sunday, where services will be held at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church.

From Berkeley Springs, the rose will make its way across the Potomac River to Hancock, Md., where it will start its tour of Maryland.

More information is available at www.runningoftherose.org.

— Staff writer John McVey can be reached at 304-263-3381, ext. 128, or jmcvey@journal-news.net



IF YOU GO

WHAT

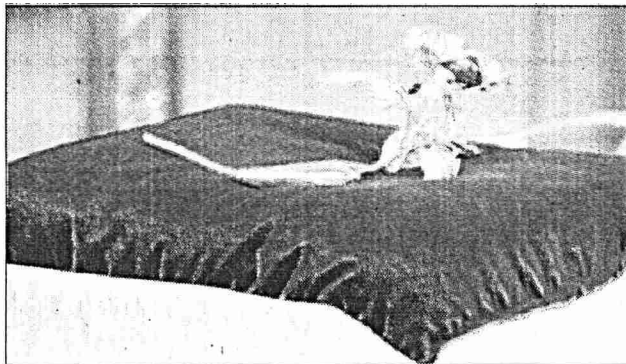
Running of the Silver Rose

WHEN

5 p.m. Saturday; 8 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday

WHERE

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church,
67 Liberty St., Berkeley Springs



Journal photo by Andrew Bartoldson

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