

Our Lady of Suyapa

The tiny image of Our Lady of the Conception of Suyapa was found by a humble young man named Alejandro Colindres and an eight-year-old boy named Lorenzo Martinez on a Saturday in February 1747. Alejandro and Lorenzo were on their way back to the village of Suyapa, tired from working all day gathering corn, when the night fell as they reached the Piligüin ravine. This seemed to them like a good place to spend the night and they laid down on the hard ground. Right away, Alejandro felt that a stone was preventing him from finding a comfortable position for his back. In the dark, he picked up the stone and threw it far away. Strangely enough, as he laid down again, he felt the same discomfort, but intrigued this time, he did not throw away the stone, instead, he put it in his backpack. At daybreak, he discovered that the mysterious object was a charming small image of Our Lady carved in cedar wood.

Our Lady of Suyapa measures less than three inches. It is a very old carving, probably the work done with devotion by an amateur artist. The angelic looks reflect the nobility of the native race. It is an image with an oval face and shoulder length straight hair: her tiny hands are joined together in a prayerful posture. The original painted color of her robe is light pink, covered by a dark cloak trimmed with golden stars and adorned with valuable jewels. The image, of great veneration for the Honduran people, rests on a solid silver sphere and appears surrounded by a circle of silver rays, which evoke “the woman clothed with the sun” mentioned in the book of Revelation.

In 1925, Pius XI declared Our Lady of Suyapa patroness of the Republic of Honduras and her feast day falls on the 3rd of February. The first shrine was blessed in 1780, and the first notable attested miracle occurred in 1796. In 1983, St. John Paul II visited the temple, which offers space for the multitude of pilgrims who visit Suyapa. The sanctuary of Our Lady of Suyapa is in one of the humblest parts of the city.