



St. Augustine, Fla. – The Diocese of St. Augustine and the City of St. Augustine are commemorating the 459th Founder’s Day anniversary on Sept. 7. This incredible event will be brimming with historical re-enactments and vibrant festivities. Prepare to be part of four thrilling days of events that commemorate the 100th anniversary of the sister city relationship with Avilés, Spain.

Founder’s Day commemorates Sept. 8, 1565, when a small band of Spaniards celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving on the shores of Northeast Florida, marking the beginning of a new settlement. This momentous event planted the seeds of Christianity in America north of Mexico and laid the foundation for a rich legacy of faith and social support in St. Augustine.

The Founder’s Day celebration on Sept. 7 will begin at 10 a.m. at the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche, located within the sacred grounds of Mission Nombre de Dios at 101 San Marco Ave., in St. Augustine. This event promises an engaging and unforgettable experience for the whole family. Visitors will have a chance to witness a historical re-enactment presented by the Historic Florida Militia: Men of Menéndez, vividly bringing to life the 1565 historic landing of Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and the subsequent establishment of St. Augustine.

Following the re-enactment, Bishop Erik Pohlmeier will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving at the Rustic Altar in its natural outdoor surroundings. The event will be graced by the presence of the Royal Family of St. Augustine, representatives of the Menorcan community and visiting governmental leaders, adding to its significance. The celebration is open to the public and free of charge. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, sunscreen and water bottles to enjoy the day’s activities.

The festivities will continue with afternoon events at the Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park, located next door to the mission at 11 Magnolia Ave. Pedro Menéndez and his entourage will march to the Fountain of Youth for the ceremonial first Thanksgiving meal re-enactment at 1 p.m. Encampment, and living history demonstrations at the Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park will be available until 5 p.m. Please note that nominal admission fees may apply to enter this part of the celebration.

This year’s Founder’s Day is particularly significant for St. Augustine as it marks the 100th anniversary of the city’s relationship with Menéndez’s ancestral home of Avilés, Spain. As part of this year’s festivities, a delegation from St. Augustine, led by the Mayor of St. Augustine, Nancy Sikes-Kline and Father John Tetlow, rector of the Cathedral Basilica, will visit Spain in August to participate in various activities, including a re-enactment, a wreath-laying ceremony and a visit to the Church of San Antonio de Padua, where Menéndez is buried. Similarly, a delegation from Avilés will visit St. Augustine in September to participate in the annual Founder’s Day events, further strengthening the bond between the two cities.

For the expanded four day events hosted by the City of St. Augustine, visit: <https://www.citystaug.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=503>.

For more information about the Founder’s Day visit: <https://dosaf1.com/2024/08/07/st-augustine-celebrates-100-year-spanish-legacy/>.