

July 24, 2008 was the 20th anniversary of Fr. McKenna's first Mass at the Midway Airport Chaplaincy. A Concelebrated Mass in honor of Our Lady of Loreto, the Patroness of all Air Travelers, was celebrated by Fr. Richard Hynes, the Director of the Archdiocesan Department of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Divine Worship. (Airport Chaplaincies are part of the Department).

During the Mass, a brand new Icon of Our Lady of Loreto was consecrated.

The Our Lady of Loreto icon has been written especially for the people who will come through O'Hare and Midway Chapels as a visual expression of faith as well as a plea of intercession to the Blessed Virgin under this particular title of the Patroness of Flyers.



*Fr. Bede Jagoe, OP, CAC
incensing the new Icon.*

The veneration of the Blessed Virgin under the title of Our Lady of Loreto is an ancient custom, and dates back to the time of the Crusades in the 13th Century, when knights came upon a house in Dalmatia on the Adriatic coast that legend held was the home of Our Lady when she lived in Ephesus in Asia Minor. Indeed, the stones used in the construction were not to be found in the region and the design was unusual and atypical for the local architectural customs.

St. King of Louis of France attended Mass in the home and the Church recognized the supernatural dimension of the house's history and a cult of veneration grew up around the home. Its mysterious transportation from Asia Minor to Dalmatia (a thousand miles away) was the catalyst to associate the home with a rapid transportation that could only be associated with flight. The home was moved, brick by brick, to Loreto in Italy where it has been a focal point of veneration and pilgrimage ever since. Miraculously, it survived the Allied bombing in World War II without a scratch even though the surrounding area was terribly affected.



The Icon, written in acrylic and 23k gold leaf on canvas by Chicago iconographer Joseph Malham, shows the statue of the Blessed Virgin and Child in a richly embroidered robe and both wear crowns: the child symbolizing His royal authority over heaven and earth and the Virgin for her dignity as Mother of God and Queen of Heaven. The clouds symbolize the Virgin's protection over all those who travel by air, the gold background signifying God's omnipresence and uncreated light embracing us throughout the cosmos. The blue trim around the edge of the banner represents the blue of the sky as well as the dark royal blue traditionally associated with the Blessed Virgin in western art.

*Iconographer Joe Malham, his
parents & Fr. Zaniolo*

An icon is not a painting or piece of art. On the contrary it is a vehicle of prayer and contemplation; a window through which one passes through to a deeper and more profound unity with God. It is hoped that those who gaze upon this image will be led to a deeper love of the Trinity and the Blessed Virgin and that, safely carried from city to city, will be transformed and help bring about the Kingdom through charity, compassion and a Gospel-rooted life.

Concelebrating with Fr. Hynes were Fathers Michael Zaniolo STL, CAC, Chaplain of O'Hare and Midway Airports; Bede Jagoe, OP, CAC; Anthony Bury; William Devine; and Sebastian MacDonald, CP; Associate Chaplains of Midway Airport. Honored Guests in attendance included Ms. Erin O'Donnell, Deputy Commissioner of Aviation; Joseph Malham, the iconographer who created the image of Our Lady of Loreto; and the Midway Chapel Volunteers, for whom the Mass was offered.

We give thanks to Almighty God for the many blessings bestowed upon Midway and all of our airports throughout these years. May God continue to bless all who work at and travel through O'Hare and Midway.

