



Virgin of the pegotes

descent and ascent of Our Lady of the Conception

Nava del Rey (Valladolid - Spain)

Descent, 30th November

Ascent, 8th December

Virgin of the pegotes

First references to Our Lady of the Conception come from the middle of the 16th century, when the chapel with the same name was built in Pico Zarcero, where Convent of San Agustin will be set up later. Subsequently, Augustinians will leave the chapel and the temple will pick up the worship to the Virgin dedicated to Our Lady of the Cuesta or of Pico Zarcero. Devotion will increase during the 17th century with many rogations in order to commend the harvest to the Marian will. In the year 1745, City Council voted her for Patron Saint of the Nava del Rey and agreed to celebrate perpetually a novena in her honour from November 30th to December 8th. The image of the Virgin descends from the chapel to the parish church in a solemn procession on December 6th.

Years ago, in the previous moments of the first celebration, a storm obliged to delay and light artificially the procession by means of bonfires and torches ("pegotes"), where the name of "Virgen de los Pegotes" came from. The result was so spectacular that fire will remain in the streets of Nava del Rey through the centuries, from yesterday to nowadays.

Initially, the virgin went down in a carriage or on a portable platform on shoulders handed over the neighbours. In the year 1893, the current horse carriage, paid for the family Pino Rodriguez, was made on purpose. The carriage is drawn by mules, the habitual animal in the agricultural works of Nava del Rey. Cattle are wisely led by muleteers who challenge the icy night with punch and mature wine, offered by the neighbours. Furthermore, it is usual that neighbours smoke cigars, a gift of the City Council since the 19th century and wear a shawl on their heads in order to protect them from the sparks. Inside the carriage, as in bygone centuries, the Patron Saint is escorted by the parish priest, the mayor and a donor's descendent.

The descent of the virgin

It is celebrated on November 30th at night, when the Virgin leaves the chapel of Pico Zarcero and reaches the baldachin of the main altar incessantly cheered with shouts traditionally known as "Vivas"

Viva the Pure and Spotless!
Viva the Mourning Star!
Viva the Rose of Jericho!

Originally, the descent took place on December 6th, until the City Council exchange it for November 30th so that the image of the Virgin would be at the parish church during the novena. As in the 18th century, there are heat from the bonfires and light from the torches in the streets of the city.

The ascent of the virgin

It is celebrated on December 8th after ending the novena, when the Hermandad Hijas de María (Sisterhood of the Daughters of Maria) deck the Virgin with cloaks and jewels in order to begin the return procession towards the chapel. During the route, the procession carries out different stops so that the faithful dedicate their best comments to the Saint Patron. In Manuel Salvador Carmona Street, the fire keeps in the rhythm of the conventual bell of the Tertiary Franciscans; meanwhile, neighbours get into groups next to the bonfires in order to counteract the cold weather. At the exit of the urban area, the procession will stop again so that the parish priest addresses briefly before singing Hail Mary.

From that moment, procession quickens its pace towards Pico Zarcero by the stony cattle of Valdego. Fervour increases when the procession arrives to the chapel, where the echo of the vivas is more sonorous. Then, the image of the Virgin is put again on the high altar so that the faithful intone her hymn, composed in 1959.

In the past, it was customary to make use of the embers of the bonfires to roast chestnuts, where the dedication of “Virgin of the Chestnuts” comes from. To recall this practice, both the ascent and the descent end in the baroque courtyard of the Town Hall, where local products and roast chestnuts tasting take place.

The descent and the ascent of Our Lady of the Conception, the Virgin of the Pegotes (Torches). Religiousness and perpetual fire in the night: Tradition

Nava del Rey. space and light

Viniculture and royal relationships (with their culminating and decadent periods) have been continuous in the historic evolution of Nava del Rey. Born as center of population in the 12th century, in the year 1560 its neighbours were exempted from the jurisdiction of Medina del Campo and King Philip II granted them the title of Town. From now on, the development will be constant and successive monarchs will grant many privileges. This progress

became evident in 1833, when Nava del Rey was appointed as head of administrative area. During the First Spanish Republic, Nava del Rey changed its royal name for “Nava de la Libertad” (Nava of the Liberty). In the year 1877, once the monarchical surname was recovered, Alfonso XII granted the city title “taking into account the importance and increasing development of Nava del Rey”

Buildings of historic-artistic interest_____

Among its artistic heritage, we stand out: Parish Church of the Santos Juanes (16th-17th centuries), with a main altarpiece of Gregorio Fernández (17th century); Vera Cruz Chapel and Humilladero de la Soledad (17th centuries); Our Lady of the Conception Chapel (16th-19th centuries); the old convents of San Agustín (18th-19th) and Franciscan Tertiaries (18th century); the Hospital of San Miguel (18th-19th centuries) and the convent of Capuchin Mothers (18th-19th centuries), which preserves an important catalogue of L. Salvador Carmona, a sculptor from Nava del Rey. In the urban framework, its wide streets allow to contemplate an outstanding group of noble houses built in brick, such as the building of the Town Hall (18th century), located in the Main Square of the town.

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