



DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Office of Communications

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Background Information on the Alliance of Cathedrals

By Francisco S. Guitard, president of the Nauta Institute

The cathedrals that are part of the alliance are considered jewels of cultural and religious heritage, and their union represents a unique collaboration in promoting faith, religious tourism and culture. These foundational cathedrals, such as the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine, Fla., Cuzco in Peru, the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba and Santiago de Compostela in Spain, hold special relevance in the context of the Camino del Mestizaje due to their historical connection with mestizaje and cultural exchange between continents.

The Cathedral Alliance is committed to promoting faith, research, knowledge exchange and cooperation in areas such as theology, sociology, heritage conservation, cultural and religious tourism promotion and the organization of joint events and activities.

Through collaboration and networking, the Cathedral Alliance seeks to strengthen the importance of these cathedrals as tourist destinations and as centers of spirituality and culture, enriching the experience of visitors and promoting intercultural understanding and dialogue.

Each cathedral is organized through its own working groups, with representation from the Cathedral Basilica itself, the Diocese of St. Augustine, associations related to the Camino de Santiago, as well as the Nauta Institute.

The Nauta Institute, the Catholic Church and the Alliance of Cathedrals are closely related. The Nauta Institute aims to promote research, dissemination and promotion of the Camino de Santiago and the cultural and religious heritage associated with it.

Within the context of the Alliance of Cathedrals, the Nauta Institute plays a significant role as an active participant in working groups and joint activities. Its collaboration focuses on areas such as historical research, the dissemination of the Camino de Santiago and the promotion of pilgrimage as a spiritual and cultural experience.

By working together with the Catholic Church and the cathedrals that are part of the alliance, the Nauta Institute contributes to strengthening the importance of these sacred sites as tourist destinations and centers of spirituality, culture and intercultural exchange. Its work is carried out in close collaboration with dioceses and other ecclesiastical institutions, as well as associations and entities related to the Camino de Santiago.

In summary, the Nauta Institute, the Catholic Church and the Alliance of Cathedrals share a common goal of promoting and preserving the spiritual, cultural and historical richness associated with the Camino de Santiago through research, cooperation and joint promotion.

The Santiago sculpture of St. James, commissioned by Francisco S. Guitard as the Nauta Institute president, holds great historical significance and carries a profound symbolic meaning as a fundamental part of initiating the connection of the Camino de Santiago in America. This remarkable sculpture was blessed and entrusted to the Apostle Santiago during the Holy Year 2022, signifying its spiritual purpose to receive and extend faith toward the western regions of the Old World.

The Santiago sculpture represents a compelling representation of the Apostle Santiago, inviting pilgrims and visitors to embark on a spiritual journey and embrace the Camino de Santiago's values and teachings. Its presence in St. Augustine serves as a powerful symbol of unity and continuity between cultures and continents, bridging the spiritual connection between the Camino in Spain and its expansion in America.

This significant artwork stands as a testament to the shared history, intercultural exchange and spiritual heritage that have shaped the Camino de Santiago over the centuries. It captures the essence of faith, resilience and exploration that defines the pilgrimage experience, resonating with the hearts and souls of those who embark on this transformative journey.

The Santiago sculpture serves as a focal point and a source of inspiration, inviting pilgrims and visitors to reflect, meditate and deepen their connection with spirituality and the values embodied by the Camino. Its presence at the beginning of Camino's expansion in America represents a remarkable milestone, signifying the continuation of the apostolic tradition and the timeless message of faith and pilgrimage.

As the Santiago sculpture takes its place in St. Augustine, it becomes a beacon of faith, a testament to the historical significance of the Camino de Santiago and a symbol of the journey towards spiritual enlightenment and personal transformation.

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