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# Envisioning Mexico's Catholic Resurgence: The Virgin of Solitude and the Talking Christ of Tlacoaxcalco 1908–1924

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On the eve of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 Archbishop Eulogio Gillow, an

activist modernizing prelate, planned an event he envisioned as a plebiscite affirming his vision of a revitalized Christian polis. He proclaimed that this new civic order would reinforce the Church's pillars of hierarchy and fervent devotion, and thus cure a society afflicted by disorder and religious indifference.<sup>1</sup> The 'vote' took place on 18 January 1909, when the Vatican's apostolic delegate in Mexico elevated the archdiocese of Oaxaca's Marian patroness, *la Virgen de la Soledad* (the Virgin of Solitude), to Rome's highest category for devotional images by placing a bejewelled crown upon her head at the height of a sumptuous festival. Afterwards, Gillow deployed the newly accessorized devotion as the focal point of a programme to reform popular religious practice. He decreed a monthly rotating pilgrimage designed to bring...

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