



## *Círio de Nazaré*

Belém is the host of the annual Círio de Nazaré, one of the world's largest celebrations honouring the Virgin Mary, who, as the Virgin of Nazaré, is the patron saint of Pará. The highlight of the 15-day festival occurs on the second Sunday of October, when the city welcomes more than one million pilgrims who come to participate in a in the Our Lady of Nazareth procession.

On the eve of the main event, a replica of Our Lady of Nazareth, patron saint of the State of Pará, is taken from a chapel near the Basilica to the Sé Cathedral, in what is called the movement procession. The Círio procession begins at 7AM and travels 6 km of Belém's streets, to the Nazareth Basilica. For four hours, to the sound of prayers and monochord hymns, a very emotional crowd throwing shredded paper and rose petals follows the ornamented berlin that carries the Saint.

Many barefoot devotees hold the rope that protects the berlin so strongly that they hurt their hands; some make solemn promises, and others, also paying for their promises, offer water to the participants. Next to the Basilica, there is the Arraial de Nazaré, with committees and typical beverages and arts and crafts.

Besides being the patron saint of Pará, Our Lady of Nazareth is also the patron saint for navigators. On Saturday morning, the image participates in a fluvial pilgrimage over Guarujá Bay, with decorated boats and fireworks. It is one of the most beautiful and touching moments of devotion to the Saint.

The festivity lasts 15 days and ends with the Recírio procession, on Monday, which carries the replica of Our Lady of Nazareth to the chapel next to the Basilica.



