Beat: Travel

"The Hill of Crosses: A Symbol of Faith and Resistance in Lithuania"

The Hill of Crosses

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USPA NEWS - The Hill of Crosses, or Kryži? Kalnas in Lithuanian, is a pilgrimage site and tourist destination located near the Lithuanian city of Šiauliai, along the E77 road that connects Kaliningrad to Riga in Latvia. This hill is one of the most spectacular places in the Baltic countries.

A perfect stop when traveling from Vilnius to Riga, the Hill of Crosses is a bizarre spectacle worth a visit.

The history of this place is shrouded in devotion, resistance, and Lithuanian national identity. Here are some fascinating details:

Origins and Tradition: The Hill of Crosses is a small hill on which over four hundred thousand crosses stand, planted by pilgrims according to a popular tradition that has lasted for centuries. In 1900, there were only 130 crosses on the hill. During the Soviet era, the crosses were completely demolished three times by bulldozers on orders of the communist regime, but they reappeared each time in even greater numbers. Today, there are over 400,000 crosses of all sizes, shapes, and materials, from small mass-produced plastic crosses to monumental artistic crosses.

Visit by Pope John Paul II: The Hill of Crosses was visited by Pope John Paul II on September 7, 1993. The crucifix he donated was placed at the foot of the hill. Cardinal Vincentas Sladkevi?ius described it as the "heart of Lithuania open to the Almighty".

Symbol of Faith and Resistance: This place is not just a collection of crosses, but a symbol of faith, hope, and determination. The crosses represent the strength of the Lithuanian people in preserving their identity and culture despite historical adversities.

Breathtaking Panorama: The view from the top of the hill offers a stunning panorama, with thousands of crosses standing out against the sky. It is a place of reflection, where visitors can leave their own crosses as a sign of prayer or remembrance.

In summary, the Hill of Crosses is a place steeped in history, significance, and beauty, attracting visitors from around the world. A place where spirituality and memory intertwine in an unforgettable way.

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