

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
HOLY MASS AND INDUCTION OF MEMBERS OF SAINT JUAN DIEGO GUILD
CHURCH OF THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN
DECEMBER 12, 2008

Zec 2:14-17

Jdt 13:18bcde, 19

Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab

Lk 1:39-47

HOMILY

Praised be Jesus Christ, now and for ever. Amen.

1. When the Blessed Virgin Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, miraculously pregnant with Saint John the Baptist, both Elizabeth and John the Baptist, in her womb, recognized the great mystery in their midst. Saint Elizabeth, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, cried out:

And how does this happen to me,

that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Gospel).

Saint John the Baptist, the last of the prophets and the herald of Our Savior at His coming, began already His divinely-given mission by leaping for joy in His mother's womb. Saint Elizabeth and Saint John the Baptist recognized the fulfillment of God's promise to become one with us, to dwell with us, so that we might be His chosen sons and daughters always (cf. Reading I).

2. It is the mystery of God's dwelling with us in His only-begotten Son, conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that Our Lady of Guadalupe proclaimed from the moment of her first apparition to Saint Juan Diego on December 9th of 1531. It is the same mystery of God's immeasurable mercy and love toward us that Our Lady of Guadalupe announced in each of her apparitions over the four days from December 9th to 12th. It is the mystery which she never ceases to announce to her children of America, in a particular way, through her miraculous image on the mantle of Saint Juan Diego. Today, the day on which she provided for Bishop Juan de Zumárraga the confirmation of the truth of her apparitions, both in a miraculous gift of roses and by God's imprinting of her image on Saint Juan Diego's mantle, we rejoice in the mystery of God's love and mercy toward us. We ask, through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, that God give us the grace to join our hearts to her Immaculate Heart, resting in the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus.

3. Today, in a wonderful way, we recognize how God has chosen us, from all time, to be the special object of His divine love by sharing our very life. The Blessed Virgin Mary, from all time, was chosen by God to be the instrument by which He would take our human flesh and be one with us always. Today, with deepest humility before God and with heartfelt trust in His Providence, we recognize our great dignity as sons and daughters of God, destined to be one with God in eternal joy and peace for all eternity.

4. Fittingly, we have dedicated today the Memorial to the Unborn, with its mausoleum for the Christian burial of our unborn brothers and sisters who have died. The Memorial to the Unborn eloquently expresses the message of Our Lady of Guadalupe: God's all merciful love toward all of His children from the moment of their conception. Even as God Himself chose to be conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, as the first moment of His greatest act of love of us, so He has taught us the inviolable dignity of all human life. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America and Star of the New Evangelization, is, in a particular way, the Mother of the Unborn. The Dedication of the Memorial to the Unborn and the Memorial itself are a call to each of us to become ever more faithful heralds and agents of the Gospel of Life, especially by respecting the life-giving nature of the conjugal union, by safeguarding the life of the unborn in the womb, and by opposing, with all our strength, the cloning of human life and the destruction of human embryos as most grave violations of God's plan for human procreation and human life.

5. During our solemn celebration of the Holy Mass, I will induct new members into the Saint Juan Diego Guild and will give recognition to those who are already members. Boys and girls, young men and young women, who are already members of the Saint Juan Diego Guild or who will soon become members, you are called to be, with Saint Juan Diego, the helpers of Our Lady of Guadalupe in showing others how much God loves them. By your daily discipline of prayer and works of charity, you will assist Our Lady of Guadalupe in bringing the love of God in Jesus Christ to everyone and especially to the peoples of the continent of America.

6. At the present time in our nation, it will be your special duty to pray for the respect of the life of all our brothers and sisters, and, above all, the innocent and defenseless unborn. By your way of acting, be one in heart with the Immaculate Heart of Mary in caring for and safeguarding every human life from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. Pray especially for those leaders of our nation who reject the Law of God, the Gospel of Life, that they may have a total conversion of heart to God and embrace the mystery of His all-merciful love. As you celebrate

membership in the Saint Juan Diego Guild, today, we all pray for you, that you will be faithful to your duties as members of the Guild, knowing the joy of being helpers of Our Lady of Guadalupe and bringing many blessings to our nation and continent.

7. Let us now recognize in our midst the great mystery of God's mercy and love toward us in the Eucharistic Sacrifice of God the Son Incarnate, the Mystery of Faith. One in heart with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, let us place our hearts totally into the glorious Heart of Jesus, ever open to receive us in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Resting our hearts in the Heart of Jesus, we will be healed of our sins and we will be filled with pure and selfless love for all our brothers and sisters, especially our unborn brothers and sisters who depend upon us, totally, for the safeguarding and fostering of their very lives.

Heart of Jesus, King and center of all hearts, have mercy on us.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America and Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us.

Saint Juan Diego, pray for us.