

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
HOLY MASS AND INDUCTION OF OUR LADY'S KNIGHTS OF THE ALTAR
CHURCH OF THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN
DECEMBER 11, 2010

Zec 2:14-17
Jdt 13:18bcde, 19
Gal 4:4-7
Lk 1:26-38

HOMILY

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

In the account of the Annunciation of the Lord we see the fulfillment of God's promise, through the Prophet Zechariah, to dwell with us always. In the wonderful conversation between the Archangel Gabriel and the Blessed Virgin Mary, we see the obedience of Mary to the Word of God: "Silence, all mankind, in the presence of the Lord! For he stirs forth from his holy dwelling" (*Zec* 2:17). Having been instructed by the Archangel Gabriel, regarding the great mystery to be accomplished through her Divine Maternity, Mary responds with all her heart:

Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord.

May it be done to me according to your word (*Lk* 1:38).

The word to which the Virgin Mary submitted in obedience was the revelation of the mystery of our salvation to be accomplished through the conception of God the Son in her immaculate womb by the overshadowing of God the Holy Spirit.

In her apparitions to Saint Juan Diego and, through Saint Juan Diego, to all her beloved sons and daughters of America and far beyond, the Mother of God teaches us the great mystery of our faith, the truth that God the Father loves us so faithfully and totally that He has sent us His only-begotten Son in our human flesh to remain with us always in the Church by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Our Lady of Guadalupe bids us to come to her, so that she may teach us the truth that Our Lord Jesus Christ Who died for our eternal salvation on the Cross remains alive for us always in the Church, continuing to save us from our sins and to give us the constant help of His grace, the pledge of eternal life, one day, with Him in the Kingdom of Heaven. Her Immaculate Heart, always one with the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, her Son, never ceases to love us and to draw us to Him, our Lord and Savior.

On the annual feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, let us reflect in a particular way upon the importance of instruction in the Word of God, unfailingly given to us in the Church, for our salvation. In the conversation between the Archangel Gabriel and the Blessed Virgin Mary, we see how the truth of the Word of God leads Mary to submit her will totally to the will of God. No less for us, it is instruction in the Word of God, which we receive in the Church, which leads us to submit our wills more and more to God's will, in obedience to His Commandments, and in faithful and total love of Him and one another.

At the time of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe, it was ignorance of the faith which was leading the Native Americans to violate the natural moral law through the diabolical practice of massive human sacrifice, and it was ignorance of the faith which was leading the European explorers and settlers to a most grievous lack of respect and outright violence toward their Native American brothers and sisters. Our Lady of Guadalupe taught both the Native Americans and the Europeans the mystery of God's mercy and love, and thus drew them together in love of one another, into unity and peace, as one people of God.

We have seen, in our own time, how the lack of a serious and thorough teaching of the faith leads to the lack of practice of the faith, both in prayer and worship, and in the conduct of our daily lives. Today, so many Catholics lack Eucharistic faith. They no longer recognize the truth that that bread and wine offered at the Holy Mass are changed in substance, in reality, into the Body and Blood of Christ for our spiritual nourishment. As a result, they are lacking in love and devotion toward the Eucharist. Many Catholics also lack an understanding of God's mercy and love toward all men, especially toward the innocent and defenseless, and toward those whose lives are heavily burdened in any way. As a result, they commit acts of violence against their brothers and sisters who are depending upon them for protection and care. Reflecting on the practical ignorance of the truth of our faith, we see how urgent it is to provide for a new instruction in the faith, for all, a new catechesis like the catechesis of the Archangel Gabriel and of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

In order that Our Lady of Guadalupe may carry out fully her mission of teaching us the mystery of faith, the mystery of God's love for us, let us recommit ourselves today to the work of building the Father John A. Hardon, S.J., Marian Catechist Apostolate Center and Retreat House. The Servant of God, Father John Anthony Hardon, whom Our Lord called to himself on December 30th of the Great Jubilee Year 2000, was a true son of Our Lady of Guadalupe. For that reason, he devoted his priestly life, in an extraordinary way, to the apostolate of catechesis. When he visited

the site of this Shrine, a little more than a year before his death, when as yet there was no building here, he blessed the ground, praying that it would be a center of true devotion to the Mother of God and, therefore, a center of sound catechesis.

The Catechetical Center will provide a constant resource for sound catechesis, according to the plan developed by the Servant of God Father Hardon for the apostolate which he founded to provide essential spiritual and doctrinal formation for catechists. He rightly asked: How will catechists communicate Jesus Christ to others, if they do not know and love Him through a solid spiritual life, centered in the Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Penance, and a solid knowledge of the Catholic faith in all its richness?

To both ends, that is, for both the spiritual and the doctrinal formation of catechists and of other pilgrims to the Shrine, the Retreat House will provide the possibility of remaining with Our Lady of Guadalupe for an extended time, in order that she may lead them ever more in giving their hearts totally to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Saint Ignatius of Loyola insisted on the importance of an, at least, annual spiritual retreat for all the faithful and taught his sons, in the Society of Jesus, to be secure guides for the faithful in making a spiritual retreat. The Servant of God Father Hardon, a faithful son of Saint Ignatius, insisted on the importance of an annual spiritual retreat for Catholics and especially for catechists, and he was himself a most secure guide to all who made a spiritual retreat under his guidance and direction.

Please pray and make sacrifices, so that the Father John Hardon Marian Catechist Apostolate Center and Retreat House can be built, at the earliest possible time. It is a major undertaking, but, even as the entire work of the Shrine has been daunting from the beginning, it is Our Lady's work, and she will help us to accomplish what we think we cannot accomplish and, indeed, much more. Let us confide the intention of the Catechetical Center and Retreat House to the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, of Saint Juan Diego, her faithful messenger; and of the Servant of God Father John Hardon, today and every day, so that Our Lady may be able to carry out her mission here, fully and completely, for the sake of the salvation of countless souls.

Hermanos y hermanas en Cristo, hijos e hijas de la Virgen de Guadalupe, el día de hoy celebramos con profunda alegría el misterio de Dios que está con nosotros a través de la maternidad divina de la Bendita Virgen María. Dios ha creado a María "llena de gracia" desde el momento de su concepción, con el fin de que Ella pudiera "concebir en su vientre y dar a luz un hijo", Jesucristo

Nuestro Señor y Nuestro Salvador. La Virgen Madre de Dios se apareció ante nosotros en nuestro continente para mostrarnos el gran misterio del amor que Dios nos tiene. Ella enseñó a San Juan Diego y continúa enseñándonos que Dios está siempre con nosotros en la Iglesia, que Él nos acompaña a lo largo de nuestra vida en nuestro peregrinar; que todo lo que Él desea, es que después de ésta vida, nosotros gocemos de la Vida Eterna con Él por siempre en el Cielo, en Su Reino.

Somos privilegiados de poder hacer una peregrinación al Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe; oremos de un modo muy especial por la construcción del Centro Catequístico Mariano “Padre John Hardon” y de la Casa de Retiro, a fin de que Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe pueda continuar enseñando a sus hijos en las verdades de la Fe y recibéndolos en los días en que ellos hagan un retiro espiritual con Ella.

El Centro Catequístico Mariano y la Casa de Retiro son particularmente necesarias en nuestro tiempo, cuando muchos no conocen o no están instruidos suficientemente en la Fe. Al mismo tiempo, son tantos los peregrinos deseosos de permanecer un tiempo con Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en su Santuario, profundizando su conocimiento y amor hacia Su Divino Hijo. Por favor hagan oración y trabajen, a fin de que el Centro Catequístico Mariano y la Casa de Retiro pronto sean construidos, para mayor gloria de Dios y la salvación de las almas.

After the Prayer after Holy Communion, I will induct new members of Our Lady’s Knights of the Altars, the young men who dedicate themselves to serving Our Lord at the altar of sacrifice of this Shrine, under the protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Let us thank God for their dedication and pray for them, that their dedication to the service of Our Lord at the altar of His Sacrifice may never waver, and that their way of thinking, speaking and acting will also be worthy of their closeness to Our Lord at His altar. In inducting the new members of the Knights of the Altar as Pages of Our Lady, in preparation to be inducted as Knights of Our Lady, I express, in the name of us all, deepest gratitude to Brother Joseph of the Friars of the Immaculate, who, over an extended period of time and with great care, has prepared the young men to present themselves today for induction as Our Lady’s Knights of the Altar.

With the Blessed Virgin Mary, we now recognize in our midst the great mystery of God’s mercy and love toward us. Joining our hearts, one with her Immaculate Heart, to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus in His Eucharistic Sacrifice, we both know the great mystery of our faith and are strengthened to live it, every moment of our lives. Resting our hearts, with the Immaculate

Heart of Mary, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we are healed of our sins and filled with the gift of His pure and selfless love for all our brothers and sisters. May our knowledge of the mystery of faith lead us to submit our wills, one in will with Mary Immaculate, to the will of God in all things, for His glory and for the salvation of many souls.

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.

Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke
Archbishop Emeritus of Saint Louis
Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura