

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
LA CROSSE
DECEMBER 12, 2013

First Reading: Zech 2:14-17
Responsorial Psalm: Jdt 13:18bcde, 19
Second Reading: Gal 4:4-7
Gospel: Lk 1:26-38

HOMILY

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

Hemos llegado en peregrinación a éste lugar sagrado dedicado a la Madre de Dios, en la solemnidad que conmemora sus apariciones en el Tepeyac, en éstos días desde el 9 de diciembre hasta el día 12 del año 1531, en un lugar vecino a la Ciudad de México. Inspirados por sus palabras que explican la razón de su aparición a San Juan Diego, su mensajero elegido, nosotros destacamos la gran importancia en nuestros hogares, barrios, comunidades locales, en la nación y en el mundo que tiene Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Madre de América y Estrella de la Nueva Evangelización. Nosotros le pedimos que interceda por nuestras necesidades e intenciones ante su Divino Hijo, Nuestro Salvador, el cual está sentado a la derecha de Dios Padre.

[We come on pilgrimage to a holy place of the Mother of God on the feast day commemorating her apparitions at Tepeyac in present-day Mexico City from December 9th to the 12th in 1531. Inspired by her words expressing the reason of her apparitions to Saint Juan Diego, her chosen messenger, we bring the many concerns of our homes, neighborhoods, local communities, nation and world to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America and Star of the New Evangelization. We ask her to intercede for our intentions before the Heavenly Throne where her Divine Son, our Savior, is seated in glory at the right hand of God the Father.]

As we, with Our Lady of Guadalupe, lift up our prayers to the Lord through the Eucharistic Sacrifice, let us recall the first words she spoke to Saint Juan Diego. Identifying herself as the Mother of God, Our Lady asked immediately that a chapel be built at the very place of her apparition, so that she could receive pilgrims, drawing them to “the Lord of all

things near us, the Lord of heaven and earth,”¹ the only font of mercy and love for us. Regarding the pilgrims to her shrine, Our Lady declared to Saint Juan Diego: “Here I will hear their weeping, their complaints and heal all their sorrows, hardships and suffering.”² Reflecting upon her words as we celebrate her feast day, we are confident that she will take to Our Lord all of the prayers we now offer and all of the petitions of the faithful who cannot be with us but have asked us to pray for their intentions today.

Por su aparición en nuestro continente, la cual continúa a través de su milagrosa imagen sobre el manto de San Juan Diego, la Madre de Dios nos lleva hacia una profunda fe en la Encarnación Redentora. Ella confirma y fortalece nuestra fe en la llegada de Dios Hijo en nuestra carne humana para liberarnos del pecado y de la muerte eterna, y nuestra fe en su presencia constante con nosotros en la Iglesia, sobre todo en el Santísimo Sacramento. En sus propias palabras, Nuestra Señora es la “Madre del Verdaderísimo Dios por quien se vive”³.

[By her apparition on our continent, which continues through her miraculous image on the mantle of Saint Juan Diego, the Mother of God leads us to a deeper faith in the Redemptive Incarnation. She confirms and strengthens our faith in the coming of God the Son in our human flesh to free us from sin and everlasting death, and our faith in His abiding presence with us in the Church, above all in the Most Blessed Sacrament. In her own words, Our Lady is “the Mother of the God of truth through Whom everything lives.”⁴]

Through the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, God the Father has fulfilled the promise He made through the Prophet Zechariah, the promise “to dwell among [us].”⁵ He has stirred “forth from his holy dwelling”⁶ to make His home with us in the Church. At the Annunciation, the promise was fulfilled. From that moment, God the Son Incarnate, through the cooperation of the Mother of God, began His mission to call together the Church, His Mystical Body, and to bring Her to life through His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. The

¹ “... el dueño de la cercanía y del la intermediación, el dueño del cielo, el dueño de la tierra.” *Nican Mopohua (Aquí se cuenta)*, tr. P. Mario Rojas Sánchez (México, D.F.: Design & Digital Print S.A. de C.V., 2001), no. 26.

[Hereafter, NM]. English translation: *A Handbook on Guadalupe* (New Bedford, MA: Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, 2001), p. 194. [Hereafter, NMEng]

² “... ahí les escucharé su llanto, su tristeza, para remediar, para curar todas sus diferentes penas, sus miserias, sus dolores.” NM, n. 32. English translation: NMEng, p. 194.

³ NM, n. 26.

⁴ “... Madre del Verdaderísimo Dios por quien se vive.” NM, n. 26. English translation: NMEng, p. 194.

⁵ Zec 2:14.

⁶ Zec 2:17.

Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary Immaculate, to Mary “full of grace,”⁷ the mission of the Divine Son she was conceiving in her womb and to Whom she was consecrated in every fiber of her being:

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall name him Jesus.

He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his Kingdom there will be no end.⁸

The eternal Kingdom which Our Lord established by His Redemptive Incarnation in the womb of the Virgin Mary, which we know already now in the Church, will reach its consummation on the Last Day, when Our Lord will restore our world and all mankind to the Father in glory, inaugurating “a new heaven and a new earth.”⁹

Saint John the Evangelist recorded his vision of the consummation of the Redemptive Incarnation at the Final Coming of Our Lord. In his vision, he saw the definitive conflict between Our Lord and Satan, the “huge red dragon” who was determined to destroy the Son of the Virgin Mary, the “woman clothed with the sun.”¹⁰ But Christ is “caught up to God and to his throne.”¹¹ He brings his victory over sin and death to its fullness. The account concludes:

Now have salvation and power come,
and the Kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Anointed.¹²

The many cares, which we bring to the Mother of God today and which our brothers and sisters have asked us to bring to her, all have ultimately to do with the salvation of our souls and the salvation of the world. Our Lady of Guadalupe by showing us her Divine Son, the only font of God’s immeasurable and unceasing mercy and love, assures us that indeed God hears our

⁷ Lk 1:28.

⁸ Lk 1:31-33.

⁹ Rv 21:1.

¹⁰ Rv 12:1.

¹¹ Rv 12:5.

¹² Rv 12:10.

prayers. She leads us to imitate her, “the handmaid of the Lord,”¹³ in preparing for the Final Coming by doing God’s will in all things, great and small.

Coming to this place, holy to Our Lord and to His Blessed Mother, we are deeply conscious of the beauty, truth and goodness with which God the Father has created the world and us. We are likewise deeply conscious of the violent rejection of God’s truth and love in so many aspects of the life of our society today. We witness a pervasive loss of respect for the inviolable dignity of innocent and defenseless human life. More and more, our society openly violates the integrity of the love of man and woman in the faithful, indissoluble and procreative union of marriage. Our political leaders justify the denial of free exercise of the human conscience in its most basic tenets for the sake of obtaining so-called goods for society. These are some of most reprehensible and frightening signs of the conflict between Our Lord and Satan, which continues to rage until Our Lord returns in glory.

In the face of these intrinsic and most grave evils, we can give only one response. We must live our Catholic faith more fully and faithfully. At the same time, we must help others to live in accord with the law which God has written upon every human heart,¹⁴ the law which demands the respect for all human life, which safeguards the integrity of marriage and the family, and which refuses to contradict itself for any reason whatever.

Peregrinar hacia ésta Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe es una poderosa fuente de gracia que nos prepara para el regreso hacia nuestros hogares y comunidades con un nuevo entusiasmo y energía para vivir llenos de fe en Cristo y para seguir muy atentamente su camino en el seno de la Iglesia. Aquí, Nuestra Señora nos conduce hacia su Divino Hijo, especialmente a través de los Sacramentos de la Penitencia y de la Sagrada Eucaristía. Aquí, Nuestra Señora nos une siempre en forma más segura hacia Él en el cumplimiento de los deberes de nuestra vida Cristiana con fidelidad y coraje. Aquí, Nuestra Señora nos invita a profundizar en nuestra comprensión y entendimiento de la Fe Católica y las demandas de la misma en cuanto a nuestra vida diaria. Aquí, Nuestra Señora por sí misma nos enseña las verdades de la fe, especialmente a través de su imagen milagrosa plasmada en la tilma de San Juan Diego. Ella nos fortalece para ser testigos de las mismas verdades en nuestros pensamientos, palabras y acciones de cada día.

[Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a powerful source of grace

¹³ Lk 1:38.

¹⁴ Cf. Rom 2:15.

preparing us to return to our homes and communities with new enthusiasm and energy to live faithfully in Christ and to follow attentively His way in the Church. Here, Our Lady leads us to her Divine Son, especially in the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. Here, Our Lady unites us ever more securely to Him in carrying out the duties of our Christian life with fidelity and courage. Here, Our Lady invites us to deepen our understanding of the Catholic faith and the demands it makes in our daily living. Here, Our Lady herself teaches us the truths of the faith, especially through her miraculous image on the mantle of Saint Juan Diego. She strengthens us to be witnesses to the same truths in our daily thoughts, words, and actions.]

In the battle with so much evil today, the Church suffers from confusion and error among so many of her members who should be faithful witnesses to the truth in its fullness. Saint Paul declared, “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.”¹⁵ So many today, even among those who identify themselves as Catholics have not heard the truths of the faith or, if they have heard them, have not understood that the Word of God by its very nature demands a total and faithful response.

En la fiesta patronal de ésta Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, oremos una vez más para que éste lugar santo sea capaz de llevar a cabo con su misión de enseñanza de la Fe, siguiendo el ejemplo de Nuestra Señora, a través de la construcción del Centro de Apostolado Catequético Mariano y Casa de Retiro “Padre John A. Hardon”. Las peregrinaciones naturalmente incrementan la sed de conocer a Dios más profundamente, así nosotros podremos amarlo y servirlo en todas las cosas. Muchos peregrinos buscan la asistencia que puede llegar a ofrecer un centro catequético, organizado de acuerdo al modelo ideado por el Siervo de Dios Padre John Anthony Hardon de la Sociedad de Jesús. También muchos desean el servicio de una casa de retiros, para que muchos puedan permanecer algunos días ante la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora con el fin de meditar y ganar gracias abundantes de las fuentes de la gracia divina en éste lugar. Los adultos y jóvenes que se preparen a recibir los sacramentos o a emprender un paso significativo en sus vidas desean tanto hacer un retiro espiritual en este santo lugar.

[On the patronal feast of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, let us pray once again that the Shrine will be able to carry out more fully its mission of teaching the faith, after the example of Our Lady, through the construction of the Father John A. Hardon Marian Catechist Apostolate Center and Retreat House. Pilgrimage naturally increases the hunger and thirst to know God

¹⁵ Rom 10:17.

more, so that we may love and serve Him in all things. Many pilgrims look for the assistance a catechetical center, organized according to the model provided by the Servant of God Father John Anthony Hardon of the Society of Jesus, will offer. Many, too, desire the service of a retreat house, so that they may remain some days at Our Lady's Shrine in order to draw more deeply from the sources of divine grace here. Adults and young people who are preparing to receive the Sacraments or to make a significant step in their lives desire very much to make a spiritual retreat in this holy place.]

We see a particularly eloquent example of the importance of careful instruction in the truths of the faith, especially in its highest expression, the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, in the work of preparing young men to serve at the altar of sacrifice with strong faith and attentive care. The Mass Servers at the Shrine follow a lengthy program of instruction and practice, under the care of Brother Joseph, in order to prepare themselves one day for induction as Our Lady's Knights of the Altar. Today, some of the Mass Servers will be inducted as pages, the step prior to Knighthood. We pray for them that they will be worthy servants of Our Lord at the altar, and that they will continue to grow in their knowledge and love of the Holy Eucharist.

Our pilgrim hearts are heavy with many cares and concerns. Our Lady of Guadalupe who drew us here invites us, one in heart with her Immaculate Heart, to lift up our hearts to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through His Eucharistic Sacrifice, so that He may heal our hearts and inflame them with His Divine Love. The glorious pierced Heart of Jesus is open now to receive our hearts. Let us give our hearts completely into His Sacred Heart. Resting our hearts in His glorious pierced Heart, we will receive the grace to bring to our brothers and sisters the truth and love which comes from Jesus Christ alone and which we have received in this holy place, under the maternal guidance and care of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Heart of Jesus, salvation of those who hope in Thee, have mercy on us.

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

Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary, Foster-Father of Jesus, and Patron of the Universal Church, pray for us.

Saint Juan Diego, pray for us.

Amen.

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE