

Memorial of Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, La Crosse
13 December 2016

Zeph 3, 1-2. 9-13
Ps 34, 2-3. 6-7. 17-18. 19. 23
Mt 21, 28-32

HOMILY

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

Today's Holy Scriptures fill us with hope for the conversion of our lives to Christ Who alone is our salvation and who never fails to pour out from His glorious pierced Heart the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Our Lord assures us, through the Prophet Zephaniah, that, in virtue of the coming of our Savior, we are not the prisoners of our wrong deeds, of our rebellion against God and His Law, if only we repent with humility of heart and with readiness to amend our lives, even as we make reparation for our sins. Let us listen again to the word of God about the coming of the Savior:

For then will I remove from your midst the proud braggarts, and you shall no longer exalt yourself on my holy mountain. But I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly, who shall take refuge in the name of the LORD: the remnant of Israel.¹

The Holy Spirit dwelling within our hearts inspires in us the humility and obedience which leads us to communion with God as members of the holy remnant of His faithful.

In the Gospel, too, Our Lord assures us that what counts is not our past misdeeds, our refusal to do His will, but our actual deeds, our humble and obedient doing of His holy will. Through the Parable of the Two Sons, Christ assures us that "the tax collectors and the harlots" are entering the Kingdom of God because they are repentant of their sins and have put their faith in Him, whereas the self-righteous chief priests and elders did not repent and refused to place their trust in Him. He declared to the chief priests and elders:

For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and harlots believed him; and even when you saw

¹ Zeph 3, 11-12.

it, you did not afterward repent and believe him.²

The Parable of the Two Sons is a constant invitation to us to recognize our sinfulness, to repent of it, to confess our sins with true sorrow and firm purpose of amendment, and to trust in the grace of the Holy Spirit to lead us forward in the way of justice, love and peace.

The life of Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr, whom we honor today is a cause of encouragement to us both because of the example of Saint Lucy and because of her powerful intercession on behalf of those who invoke her. Saint Lucy, thanks to the extraordinary upbringing which we received from her parents and especially from her mother, after her father had died during her infancy, was remarkably disposed to do God's will in all things. Thus, she consecrated herself totally to Our Lord in a hidden way from her infancy. Under the most violent threats, she refused to betray her vow of virginity, and she embraced the total gift of herself in martyrdom. Reflecting upon the life of Saint Lucy and her living presence with us in the Communion of Saints, we understand yet more deeply the word of God to us today, the word of God which invites us to prepare for the celebration of His coming to dwell with us in our human flesh by a life of daily conversion to Him and to His way of pure and selfless love.

Today, we remember in our offering of the Holy Mass a good religious and priest who has helped countless pilgrims to turn more completely to Our Lord and to embrace His will more humbly in their daily living. In these days, Father Jacinto Mary Chapin, Friar of the Immaculate, is completing his service to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We thank God for the grace of his religious and priestly consecration which have been the font of his pastoral charity, witnessed by so many during his years of service here. In a particular way, we thank God for the generous way in which Father Jacinto Mary dedicated himself to the service of the Spanish-speaking pilgrims. In that way, he has reflected the remarkable life of the Franciscan Friars at the time of the apparitions of Our Lady. They were her true sons as religious and priests in bringing the message and grace of God's all-merciful love to millions of the faithful.

Uniting our hearts to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus as He makes present sacramentally His Sacrifice on Calvary, we understand the deep meaning of Father Jacinto's faithful and generous response to Christ's call in helping countless pilgrims to meet Christ here under the loving care of His Immaculate Mother. In imitation of Saint Francis, Saint Maximilian Kolbe and Saint Pio of Pietrelcina, he has given witness to the immeasurable and unceasing love of Christ

² Mt 21, 32.

the High Priest for His flock, building-up His Mystical Body, purifying and inflaming hearts with the same pure and selfless love.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe is blessed to have the service of Franciscan Friars, the Friars of the Immaculate, who follow the primitive observance of Saint Francis, giving their lives completely in Christ-like poverty, chastity and obedience. I am happy to have the occasion to express publicly the profound gratitude of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe for the service of the Friars of the Immaculate. I pray fervently that the Shrine may always enjoy the service of Friars like Father Jacinto Mary.

Let us now, one with the Immaculate Heart of Mary and with the virginal heart of Saint Lucy, offer our hearts completely to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, opened for us in His Eucharistic Sacrifice. Thanking God for the religious and priestly life of Father Jacinto, as it has been lived in our midst, let us also pray for him as he goes forth to a new mission. Our Lady of Guadalupe shows us here the great mystery of God's all-merciful love. May we respond with love to His love, imitating Our Lady and Saint Lucy. May Our Lady of Guadalupe and Saint Lucy intercede for us all and for Father Jacinto Mary, so that we may always know in our lives the fulfillment of God's promise of freedom from sin and everlasting death, His promise of eternal salvation.

Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of charity, have mercy on us.

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

Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr, pray for us.

Saints Francis of Assisi, Maximilian Kolbe and Pio of Pietrelcina, pray for us.

Saint Juan Diego, pray for us.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE