

MEMORIAL OF SAINT PETER CHRYSOLOGUS, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH  
HOLY MASS FOR DONORS  
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE  
LA CROSSE  
30 JULY 2014

Eph 3, 8-12  
Ps 119, 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14  
Lk 6, 43-45

### HOMILY

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

Our Lord uses parables to help us to grow in our knowledge of the great truth of His love for us and, at the same time, to grow in our response of love to His love. In our Christian life, there is an irreplaceable bond between divine truth and divine love. The more we ponder the truth, the mystery, of God's love for us, the more we are inspired and strengthened to open our hearts to God's grace, so that we may practice the truth in love of God and of our neighbor. The parable is a most apt form to teach mysteries which ultimately lie beyond our ability to comprehend, for the parable invites continual reflection upon the mystery, leading us to an always deeper knowledge of and participation in the mystery. By listening to and reflecting upon the parables of Our Lord, we do, as we prayed in the Responsorial Psalm: "Within my heart I treasure your promise, that I may not sin against you."<sup>1</sup>

In today's Gospel, Our Lord uses the parable of the fig tree and the grape arbor to illustrate that our attitudes, words and actions flow from the depths of our mind and heart. If our mind and heart provide an ample place of dwelling for the Holy Spirit, then we will have the Mind and Heart of Christ, and we, by means of our attitudes, words, and actions, will give witness to Christ alive within us. At the same time, a way of thinking, speaking and acting which is not of Christ cannot come from a mind which is contemplating his truth and a heart which is resting in His glorious pierced Heart. Our Lord concluded the brief parable with these words which should be a daily meditation for us, especially as we make our nightly examination of conscience and Act of Contrition before going to sleep:

A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces  
good,

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<sup>1</sup> Ps 119 [118], 11.

but an evil person out of a store evil produces evil;  
for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.<sup>2</sup>

Today, in a particular way, let us pray that we may devote our minds daily to the knowledge of the truth of the mysteries of our faith and that we may give our hearts daily to living the truth in love of God and of our neighbor.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, is our model and most powerful intercessor, for her mind and heart, her very being, was completely consecrated to Christ and His saving work from the first moment of her life, from the moment of her Immaculate Conception. According to the plan of God, she received, in anticipation, the grace of eternal salvation which her Divine Son would win for all men by His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. She was totally for Christ, in mind and heart, from the very beginning, and she continues to be so, as is most beautifully manifested at this shrine. She never ceases to draw all men to her Immaculate Heart, so that they will, with her, give their hearts completely to the Heart of Jesus.

In the Letter to the Ephesians, Saint Paul acknowledged with humility that he was “the very least of all the holy ones,”<sup>3</sup> while also acknowledging that Christ at work within him was enabling him

to bring to light for all what is the plan of the mystery hidden from ages past in God who created all things, so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the principalities and authorities in the heavens.<sup>4</sup>

With complete humility and, therefore, complete trust in God’s grace, Saint Paul became the Apostle of the Nations. He was Our Lord’s chosen instrument to bring His truth and love to all men.<sup>5</sup>

If we want to know the truth and to practice it with love, we must, under the guidance of our Blessed Mother, be attentive to our mind and heart. We must strive daily to ponder more deeply the mysteries of our faith with our mind and to give our hearts more and more completely to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through our acts of worship, prayer and devotion – above all, through regular confession, Sunday Mass and, as much as possible, daily Mass. Our mind and heart, one with the Mind and Heart of Christ, will express in all things the pure and selfless love which flows from His Sacred Heart without measure and without cease.

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<sup>2</sup> Lk 6, 45.

<sup>3</sup> Eph 3, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Eph 3, 9-10.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Acts 9, 15.

Today, we celebrate the memory of Saint Peter Chrysologus, Archbishop of Ravenna in present-day Italy from 433 to 450, an heroic servant of the pastoral charity of Christ at work in the Church through His Bishops and their co-workers, the priests. In his service of Archbishop, he was called from the very beginning to face the gravest difficulties in the Church, especially heresy regarding the two natures, human and divine, united in the one divine Person of Christ. Confronting so great a challenge, he trusted always more completely Christ's promise, first made to the Apostles and, through them, to their successors in every time and place:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”<sup>6</sup>

He, therefore, defended the truth in the face of great persecution. One of his biographers tells us:

When he entered on his charge he found large remains of paganism in his diocese, and abuses had crept in among the faithful; the total extirpation of the one and the reformation of the other were the fruit of his labors.<sup>7</sup>

Facing a most difficult situation for the Church, Saint Peter Chrysologus devoted himself, above all, to teaching the truth of the faith, especially through his sermons.

The same biographer also informs us about the principal content of his preaching: “In his sermons he strongly recommends frequent communion, that the Eucharist, the body of Christ, may be the daily bread of our souls.”<sup>8</sup> It is, in fact, from the sermons of Saint Peter Chrysologus that we learn about his life of tireless service of the flock at Ravenna. Dom Prosper Guéranger, in his commentary on the feast day of Saint Peter Chrysologus, comments on the fundamental influence of our Blessed Mother upon his preaching:

The mystery of the Incarnation is a frequent subject of the saint's sermons, and he always speaks upon it with a precision and enthusiasm, which show his learning and piety. His veneration and love towards Mary, the Mother of God, who, in that very age, had triumphed over her enemies by the decree of the Council of Ephesus, inspire him with

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<sup>6</sup> *Mt* 28:19-20.

<sup>7</sup> Herbert Thurston, S.J., and Donald Attwater, eds., *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, Complete Edition, New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1956, Vol. IV, p. 485.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 486.

thoughts and language which are extremely fine.<sup>9</sup>

His name Chrysologus refers, in fact, to the “golden” quality of his preaching because of his fidelity to the word of Christ. Pope Benedict XIII named him a doctor of the Church in 1729.

Studying the life of Saint Peter Chrysologus, one can only admire and hope to emulate his trust that the word of Christ converts hearts and transforms the world in accord with God’s law. In his life, we see the irreplaceable relationship between divine truth and divine love. We are also led to reflect on how such trust in the power of sound doctrine is needed by Bishops and priests in our time for their faithful and generous practice of pastoral charity in a totally secularized culture.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a privileged place in which to contemplate, through the eyes of the Virgin Mary, the mysteries of our faith and, above all, the great Mystery of Faith. Here we never cease to ponder the Mystery of God the Father’s immeasurable and unceasing love of us in His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ Who pours forth into our hearts, from His glorious pierced Heart, the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit. It is to the Mystery of Faith at work for us in the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, that all the mysteries of our faith point and are essentially related. Here, Our Lady of Guadalupe unites our minds and hearts to her own, so that she may lead us, with maternal love, to give our minds and hearts completely to Christ, to rest our hearts totally within the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, her Divine Son. Here, Our Lady of Guadalupe teaches us the truths of our faith, so that we may practice them with pure and selfless love of God and of our neighbor.

The entire mission of the Shrine is contained in the mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe and of her faithful messenger, Saint Juan Diego. The Shrine is to be nothing more and nothing less than a sacred place in which Our Lady of Guadalupe manifests to pilgrims the mystery of God’s immeasurable and unceasing love of them in Jesus Christ, God the Son and her Son. Calling her sons and daughters to make pilgrimage, the Mother of God accompanies them and leads ultimately to this church and to the encounter with Christ here in the teaching of His word, in the Sacrament of Penance by which He forgives our sins and, above all, in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, by which He gives to us His very Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, as the Heavenly Bread to sustain us along the way of our earthly

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<sup>9</sup> Prosper Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year, Advent*, tr. Laurence Shepherd (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2000), pp. 319-320.

pilgrimage and as the pledge of the destiny of our pilgrimage, the glory of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb in the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>10</sup>

Reflecting upon the vision of the Shrine for the realization of its mission, in the light of today's celebration of the Holy Mass, we understand how important it is to continue pursuing steadfastly the vision which has led to the foundation and the ongoing development of the Shrine, especially through the building of the Father John A. Hardon Marian Catechist Apostolate Center and Retreat House, so that the truths of the faith may be more fully communicated in a time of great confusion and error, and so that pilgrims may remain with Our Lady for several days, in order to deepen their knowledge of Our Lord and increase the fervor of their love for Him. Let us pray especially today that this next stage of the vision may be attained in good time. Let us pray, too, that the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe here may always have the material support which it needs, in order to continue its great spiritual work for the salvation of many souls.

In the name of all of the pilgrims to the Shrine, I thank you the esteemed donors to the Shrine. Without your faithful and generous cooperation with God's grace, the Shrine would not exist and would not be able to continue to be, for countless pilgrims, a privileged place of encounter with Christ in the company of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Your financial support of the Shrine not only makes it possible for the daily activities of the Shrine to continue but gives a strong witness to Christ in our time. It gives witness to the truth that we only truly live by the word of Christ, by knowing the truth of the word of Christ and by putting the word of Christ into practice with pure and selfless love.<sup>11</sup> In a particular way, you give inspiration and courage to all of us who have the daily responsibility for the direction and operation of the Shrine. The Holy Mass this evening is offered for your intentions as the highest and most perfect expression of gratitude.

Let us all now rededicate ourselves to continue the sacred mission of the Shrine and to the pursuit of its vision. Let us pray, in a special way, that we all may be dedicated anew to serving Our Lady of Guadalupe and, with her, to serving her Divine Son in His work of saving souls, of transforming the world until the Last Day, the Day of His Coming in Glory. Let us ask for the grace to imitate Saint Juan Diego as humble, faithful and generous messengers of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Let us pray that, through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Saint Juan Diego, the Shrine will always remain true to its noble mission as a holy place to which the faithful come on pilgrimage to obtain the grace of a

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Rev 19, 7-9.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Mt 4, 4; Lk 4, 4.

fuller union of mind and heart with the Mind and Heart of Christ, the grace of living faithfully in Christ in the Church, each and every day of their lives, for the love of God and of their neighbor, the grace of producing abundant good fruit from the truth and love of Christ dwelling in their minds and hearts.

Let us now lift up our hearts, one with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus opened for us in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Let us lift up to the Heart of Jesus all of the intentions of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and above all the intention of the fidelity of the Shrine to its high mission. In the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, as Saint Peter Chrysologus so wonderfully teaches us, our hearts, one with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, will be healed of sin and inflamed with Divine Truth and Love.

*Heart of Jesus, salvation of those who trust in Thee, have mercy on us!*

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

*Saint Peter Chrysologus, pray for us!*

*Saint Juan Diego, pray for us!*

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE