

First Vespers for the Solemnity of the Anniversary of the Dedication of a Church
Tenth Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe
La Crosse, Wisconsin
30 July 2018

Eph 2, 19-22

Homily

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

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies, my brother priests, brothers and sisters in the Consecrated Life, and brothers and sisters in Christ, on this vigil of the Tenth Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, let us thank God for the great truth declared to us by Saint Paul:

You are strangers and aliens no longer. No, you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God.¹

Let us recognize in the great physical beauty of this church the sign of an infinitely greater beauty: the Love of God, which has saved us from sin and everlasting death by the Redemptive Incarnation of His only-begotten Son. God, in His immeasurable and unceasing love for us, has transformed this building into His House, the place in which He dwells with us, making us living members of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ.² God has made us “fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God.”³

By God’s grace, as Saint Paul reminds us, we “form a building which rises on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the capstone.”⁴ It is Christ Who brings us to life in the Church, so that He may teach, sanctify and discipline us, leading us along the way of our earthly pilgrimage to our lasting home with Him in Heaven. Through the Apostles and their successors, He never ceases to be the Head and Shepherd of the flock in every time and place, until the Last Day, when he will restore all creation to the Father, inaugurating “new heavens and a new earth,”⁵ the Wedding Feast of the Lamb in the New and Eternal Jerusalem.⁶ Christ, our Good Shepherd, gives even the weakest of us the

¹ Eph 2, 19.

² Cf. 1 Cor 12, 12. 27.

³ Eph 2, 19.

⁴ Eph 2, 20.

⁵ 2 Pt 2, 13.

⁶ Cf. Rev 19, 6-9; 21, 1-7.

grace to be built up into “a holy temple in the Lord,” “a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”⁷

As we prepare to celebrate with deepest gratitude the ten years in which God has dwelled in this church as truly His house, let us pray that God, through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, will drive away from this church all influence of the Evil One, that he will, in the words of the Collect, grant that it may be always a place in which “pure worship” is offered to Him and the “fullness of redemption” is offered to His sons and daughters in His only-begotten Son.

Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of heaven, 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!

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

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

⁷ Eph 2, 21-22.