

Wednesday in the Octave of Easter  
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
La Crosse  
March 30, 2016

Acts 3, 1-10  
Ps 105, 1-2. 3-4. 6-7. 8-9  
Lk 24, 13-35

## HOMILY

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

Today's Gospel inspires us to reflect upon two fundamental ways in which Our Risen Lord is alive for us in the Church. Our Lord, seated in glory at the right hand of the Father, pours forth into our hearts the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit through the Church's teaching and the Sacraments, above all, the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The disciples on the way to Emmaus on Easter Sunday evening had failed to recognize the Mystery of Faith; they did not understand the truth about Our Lord's Suffering, Dying and Rising from the Dead. Our Risen Lord appeared to them in His glorious Body and, first, instructed them in the faith, showing them how everything that His Father had revealed to His holy people over the centuries had come to fulfillment in the Paschal Mystery. He then made present the reality of everything that He had taught them: He renewed sacramentally His Sacrifice on Calvary in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, as He had done, for the first time, at the Last Supper.

The Gospel tells us:

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.<sup>1</sup>

The two disciples themselves comment on the entire encounter with Our Risen Lord:

Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?<sup>2</sup>

The Lord's teaching disposed them to recognize Him in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

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<sup>1</sup> Lk 24, 30-31.

<sup>2</sup> Lk 24, 32.

The grace of the encounter with Our Lord enabled them to return immediately to Jerusalem and to relate their experience to the Apostles. The Apostles announced to them the truth of the Resurrection with words which became the traditional Easter greeting in Rome: “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!, “*Surrexit Dominus vere et apparuit Simoni, Alleluia!*”<sup>3</sup> Having heard the greeting of faith, they then explained to the Apostles how they too had experienced its truth. They recounted how the Risen Lord “was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.”<sup>4</sup>

The miraculous healing of the crippled man at the gate of the temple, through the Apostolic ministry of the Apostles Peter and John, manifested the dynamism of the life of the Risen Christ in the Church from her very beginning. Saint Peter made clear who was acting on behalf of the crippled man. Peter made clear that he was acting in the person of Christ as Head and Shepherd of the flock in every time and place. The crippled man was looking for some material help from the Apostles Peter and John, but they were able to give him what He most needed: the healing and strength of Our Lord. Peter declared to him: “I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, rise and walk.”<sup>5</sup> The Risen Christ alive in His holy Church healed him. Rightly, the crippled man did not praise Saints Peter and John for his miraculous cure but rather, as the Acts of the Apostles tell us: “He leaped up, stood, and walked around, and went into the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God.”<sup>6</sup>

Pilgrims to shrines are very much like the disciples on the road to Emmaus. They are pondering many matters in their hearts. Coming on pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Mother of God takes them to the Risen Christ alive in our midst, especially in the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist, Who gives them the gift of His Holy Spirit to cleanse them of sin and to inspire and strengthen them for every good work. Fundamental to the encounter with Our Lord at a shrine is instruction in the rich truths of the faith, which are all ultimately connected with the truth of the Paschal Mystery. Everything about the Shrine here, its natural beauty and the care of that natural beauty, the sacred architecture, the sacred art, the

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<sup>3</sup> Lk 24, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Lk 24, 35.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 3, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Acts 3, 8.

devotional and memorial areas, every aspect of the Shrine is catechetical. Every aspect is meant to deepen our knowledge of Our Lord and, as a result, enkindle in us a more ardent love of Him. How often the staff of the Shrine recount to me how, when they guide a pilgrim to the Shrine, their explanations of the meaning of one or another aspect of the Shrine inspires a response of faith and love in the pilgrim.

The responsibility of the Shrine to be an instrument by which Our Lord instructs hearts in the truth of the Paschal Mystery and in all the truths of the faith is especially weighty in our time which is profoundly marked by confusion and error about the most fundamental truths. The confusion and error in the culture has its effect within the Church herself. The Servant of God Father John A. Hardon, S.J., spoke so often of the crisis of catechesis in our time and was inspired to found the Marian Catechist Apostolate in order to promote sound catechesis.

The inspiration of the Shrine has always included the promotion of sound catechesis, especially through the spiritual and doctrinal formation of catechists. The Servant of God Father Hardon visited the Shrine in the last years of his life and blessed the ground upon which this Shrine Church now stands, expressing the desire that it be the spiritual home of the Marian Catechist Apostolate.

Having worked closely with Father Hardon during the years of the establishment of the Apostolate and having promised to him, before his death, that I would continue the work, the catechetical work of the Shrine is always in my heart, as it is in the heart of the many consecrated members of the Apostolate, and many supporters of the Shrine. Even as Father Hardon always stressed in his tireless catechetical work, the center for the promotion of sound catechesis should also be a retreat house in which pilgrims could stay for some days, in order to deepen their knowledge and love of Christ. Thanks be to God, the land for the Marian Catechist Apostolate Center and Retreat House was purchased several years ago and a careful plan for it has been developed. All that remains is to gather the necessary funding to build it, in accord with the excellence which has been and needs to be the standard of every aspect of the Shrine.

Today those dedicated to the mission of the Shrine from various parts of our country have been meeting, either in person or by telephone, to carry forward the catechetical work of the Shrine by way of a major capital campaign. Because of the critical importance of the catechetical mission of the Shrine, I have traveled from Rome to be with them and to lead them in the important work which is ours.

Over the next months, the capital campaign will unfold in its various stages, inviting the generous involvement of as many as possible who understand how critically important a catechetical center and retreat house in this holy place are for our time. The generous response to the capital campaign will provide the necessary funds to increase substantially the endowment of the Shrine, safeguarding better its future, and to build the Marian Catechist Apostolate Center and Retreat House. Please pray for God's blessing upon the capital campaign, fittingly known as "Answering Mary's Call," as she first gave it to Saint Juan Diego:

I want very much to have a little house built here for me, in which I will show [the Lord of heaven and earth], I will exalt Him and make Him manifest. I will give Him to the people in all my personal love, in my compassion, in my help, in my protection: because I am truly your merciful Mother, ....<sup>7</sup>

Let us all pray and work for Our Lady's catechetical center and retreat house by which she will lead pilgrims to contemplate the truth of the great mystery of the Redemptive Incarnation, the truth that God the Father, out of His immeasurable and unceasing love for man, has sent God the Son in our human flesh, so that, by His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, the Holy Spirit, poured forth from His glorious pierced Heart, might dwell in our hearts always. In a particular way, I ask you to join the Marian Catechist Apostolate in offering the *Memorare* five times every day, so that sufficient funds will be raised for the Catechetical Center and Retreat House.

One with the Immaculate Heart of Mary and under her maternal guidance, let us now lift up our hearts to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. Let us place in His Heart the many intentions which are in our hearts, as they were in the hearts of the disciples on the way to Emmaus. In the Heart of Jesus, our hearts will be cleansed of sin and, "burning within us,"<sup>8</sup> will be filled with love of Him, as were their hearts. Through the Holy Spirit, flowing immeasurably and unceasingly from His glorious pierced Heart, Our Lord will unite us to Himself in His Eucharistic Sacrifice and spiritually nourish us with the Heavenly Food which is truly His Body,

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<sup>7</sup> "Mucho quiero, mucho deseo que aquí me levanten mi casita sagrada. En donde mostraré [el dueño del cielo, el dueño de la tierra], lo ensalzaré al ponerlo de manifiesto: La daré a las gentes en todo mi amor personal, en mi mirada compasiva, en mi auxilio, en mi salvación: Porque yo en verdad soy vuestra madre compasiva, ...." *Nican Mopohua (Aquí se cuenta,)*, tr. Mario Rojas Sánchez (México, D.F.: Design & Digital Print S.A. de C.V., 2001), pp. 3-4, nos. 26-29. English translation: "Nican Mopohua: Original Account of Guadalupe," *Handbook on Guadalupe* (New Bedford, MA: Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, 1997), p. 194.

<sup>8</sup> Lk 24, 32.

Blood, Soul and Divinity. Our eyes will be opened, and we will recognize His Real Presence, as we recognize Him best, when, through His priest, He takes bread, consecrates it, and then breaks it and gives it to us both as the sustenance of our earthly pilgrimage and as the pledge of our eternal destiny with Him.<sup>9</sup> May the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus be the font of generous sacrifice for the growth of the great spiritual work of the Shrine here and especially for the needed increase of its Endowment Trust and for the building of the Father John A. Hardon, S.J. Marian Catechist Apostolate Center and Retreat House.

*Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection, have mercy on us.*

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

*Saint Joseph, Protector of holy Church, pray for us.*

*Saint Juan Diego, pray for us. Amen.*

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

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Lk 24, 30-31.