

VOTIVE MASS OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE  
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE  
LA CROSSE  
JULY 28, 2012

First Reading: *Rev* 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab [690A]

Responsorial Psalm: *Jdt* 13:18bcde, 19

Gospel: *Lk* 1:39-48

### HOMILY

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

The encounter of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her cousin Saint Elizabeth at the Visitation reveals the power of the Mystery of the Redemptive Incarnation at work from the first moment of the conception of God the Son in the womb of the Virgin Mary through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. Just after the virginal conception of God the Son in her womb, His Mother Mary traveled to Ain Karim to assist her cousin Saint Elizabeth who, as the Virgin Mary had learned from the Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation, was, notwithstanding her advanced years, in the six month of pregnancy. The very greeting of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, upon arriving at her home, conveyed to Elizabeth the presence of the mystery. Hearing Mary's greeting, Elizabeth declared to Mary, whom she identified as "the mother of [her] Lord"<sup>1</sup>: "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."<sup>2</sup> In the meeting of the eyes of Mary Immaculate and the holy Elizabeth, Elizabeth clearly perceived the Mystery of the Redemptive Incarnation.

So powerful was the Visitation of Saint Elizabeth by the Blessed Virgin Mary that the child in Elizabeth's womb, Saint John the Baptist, the last of the Prophets and the Precursor of the Savior, leaped for joy. Through the mysterious working of divine grace and the intimate communion with his mother Elizabeth, John the Baptist, too, perceived the presence of the Savior to Whom he was bound, from his conception, by a particularly strong bond of grace.

We recall the words of the angel of the Lord to Zechariah, John the Baptist's father at the moment of the Baptist's conception:

Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and

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<sup>1</sup> *Lk* 1:43.

gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth; for he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.<sup>3</sup>

In the response of Saint John the Baptist in the womb, we witness already the truth of the words of the angel of the Lord, "he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb," and we see him beginning already his vocation and mission of going before Christ "in the spirit and power of Elijah" to prepare the people to receive Him as their Savior.

At the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint John the Baptist leaped in the womb of his mother Elizabeth, for he recognized the presence of the salvation of the world in the tiny human life conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, and growing and developing within her womb for the sake of His Birth, His Public Ministry, and their culmination in His Saving Passion, Death and Resurrection.

Saint John the Baptist, hidden from sight in the womb of his mother Elizabeth, recognized the presence of her whom the Apostle John, in his vision recorded in the Book of Revelation, described as "a woman clothed with the sun,"<sup>4</sup> who "gave birth to a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod."<sup>5</sup> God the Son Incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary is the only child ever born to woman whom God destined to rule all His children with the iron rod of His justice which is, at the same time, the font of "the ocean" of His Mercy and Love.<sup>6</sup> Through the Redemptive Incarnation, the Mercy and Love of God heal and strengthen us to be just, to be holy in the sight of God.

The Child Jesus indeed "was caught up to God and his throne" at the Ascension. Seated in glory at the right hand of God the Father, He unceasingly pours forth in abundance the Mercy and Love of God the Father into our souls and upon our world. Truly, we, before the image of the Mother of God, under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, with the joy which filled Saint John the Baptist in the womb at the Visitation, cry out in the words of the "loud voice in heaven," saying:

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<sup>2</sup> *Lk* 1:42

<sup>3</sup> *Lk* 1:13-17.

<sup>4</sup> *Rev* 12:1.

<sup>5</sup> *Rev* 12:5.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul*, Stockbridge, MA:

Now have salvation and power come,  
and the Kingdom of our God  
and the authority of his Anointed.<sup>7</sup>

Reflecting during these days upon the experience of being “touched by her gaze,” touched by the merciful gaze of the Virgin Mother of God, Our Lady of Guadalupe, we, with Saint Elizabeth and Saint John the Baptist, recognize the unfathomable truth which her eyes reflect and communicate, that is, God’s immeasurable and ceaseless love of us in His only-begotten Son, the Son of Mary, our Brother and our Savior.

Looking into the eyes of Our Lady of Guadalupe whose eyes are ever turned toward us with maternal compassion, we recognize the deepest truth about ourselves. We see in the eyes of the Virgin Mary, whom her Divine Son has given to us as our Mother in the Holy Spirit, our dignity as sons and daughter of God, brothers and sisters of God the Son Incarnate. We see in her eyes the truth that we and indeed our world have been redeemed by the Redemptive Incarnation of God the Son in her immaculate womb. We recognize our vocation and mission as sons and daughters of God in God the Son to be, with Saint Juan Diego, messengers of the Virgin Mother, drawing all our brothers and sisters to Christ Who alone is our salvation, Who alone is the “son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod,”<sup>8</sup> the “iron rod” of Divine Mercy and Love which makes us just and holy in His sight and before the eyes of the world.

Our vocation and mission is not some abstract notion for us but is the heart of our ordinary life in Christ, which by His grace, becomes extraordinary. Building up the unity and peace which are the fruits of a virtuous life in the home in which the Sacred Heart of Jesus is King, serving our brothers and sisters who are in most need, especially the innocent and defenseless unborn, and those who have grown weak because of special needs, serious illness or advanced years; working to safeguard and promote the truth and justice which are the foundations of our life in society, especially the truth about marriage and the family, as God has planned them from the beginning; and, in all things, striving, each moment of the day, to rest our hearts in the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, we announce to the world the truth that the “salvation and power” of the Kingdom of God have come into the world. We, one with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, one with the Virgin of Guadalupe, draw others to Christ, the fullness of the Mercy and Love of God in our midst, in His holy Church.

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Marian Press, 2011, p. 460, no. 1273.

<sup>7</sup> *Rev* 12:10.

Let us pray that the fruit of our days together as members of the Queen of the Americas Guild will bear fruit in a life lived always under the merciful gaze of the Mother of God, in the communion of hearts, with her Immaculate Heart, in the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus. In the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our hearts will find the healing and strength to be, in imitation of Saint John the Baptist, true and courageous messengers of the truth of our salvation in Jesus Christ. In the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, our hearts will be filled with the joy and peace which Saint Elizabeth and Saint John the Baptist in her womb experienced at the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Let us now lift upon our hearts to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, opened for us in the Eucharistic Sacrifice by which He makes present for us His Sacrifice on Calvary. Let us lift up our hearts, filled with so many joys and sorrows to the font of Divine Mercy and Love, trusting that in the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus we will be confirmed in peace and strengthened to carry the cross of our sorrows with the trust of the Virgin Mary, sung by Saint Elizabeth:

Blessed are you who believed  
that what was spoken to you by the Lord  
would be fulfilled.<sup>9</sup>

So may we, under the constant and merciful gaze of the Virgin of Guadalupe, be her messengers, that many may come to know her, the Mother of God, and knowing her, may know her Divine Son, our Savior, the Savior of the World.

*Heart of Jesus, abode of justice and love, have mercy on us!*

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

*Saint Elizabeth, pray for us!*

*Saint John the Baptist, pray for us!*

*Saint Juan Diego, pray for us!*

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

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<sup>8</sup> *Rev* 12:5.

<sup>9</sup> *Lk* 1:45.