

Solemnity of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
La Crosse  
December 12, 2020

Zech 2, 14-17  
Jdt 13, 18bcde. 19  
Rv 11, 19a; 12, 1-6a.10ab  
Lk 1, 26-38

## **Homily**

*Praised be Jesus Christ!*

We come to Our Lady of Guadalupe on her feast day with troubled and heavy hearts. Our nation is going through a crisis which threatens its very future as free and democratic. The worldwide spread of Marxist materialism, which has already brought destruction and death to the lives of so many, and which has threatened the foundations of our nation for decades, now seems to seize the governing power over our nation. To attain economic gains, we as a nation have permitted ourselves to become dependent upon the Chinese Communist Party, an ideology totally opposed to the Christian foundations upon which families and our nation remain safe and prosper. I speak of the United States, but evidently many other nations are in the throes of a similar most alarming crisis.

Then, there is the mysterious Wuhan virus about whose nature and prevention the mass media daily give us conflicting information. What is clear, however, is that it has been used by certain forces, inimical to families and to the freedom of states, to advance their evil agenda. These forces tell us that we are now the subjects of the so-called “Great Reset”, the “New Normal”, which is dictated to us by their manipulation of citizens and nations through ignorance and fear. Now, we are supposed to find in a disease and its prevention the way to understand and direct our lives, rather than in God and in His plan for our salvation. The response of many Bishops and priests, and of many faithful has manifested a woeful lack of sound catechesis. So many in the Church seem to have no understanding of how Christ continues His saving work in times of plague and of other disasters.

What is more, our holy Mother Church, the spotless Bride of Christ, in which Christ is ever at work for our eternal salvation, is beset by reports of moral corruption, especially in matters of the Sixth and Seventh Commandments, which seem to increase by the day. In our own nation, the reports about Theodore McCarrick have rightly tempted many devoted Catholics to question the shepherds who, in accord with Christ’s plan for the Church, are to

be their secure guides by teaching the truths of the faith, by leading them in the fitting worship of God and in prayer to Him, and by guiding them by means of the Church's perennial discipline.

Too often, the faithful receive nothing in response or a response which is not grounded in the unchanging truths regarding faith and morals. They receive responses that seem to come not from shepherds, but from secular managers. The confusion regarding what the Church truly teaches and demands of us, in accord with her teaching, generates ever greater divisions within the Body of Christ. All of this cripples the Church in her mission of witness to divine truth and divine love at a time when the world has never needed more the Church to be a beacon. In encountering the world, the Church falsely wants to accommodate herself to the world, instead of calling the world to conversion in obedience to the divine law written on every human heart and revealed in its fullness in the Redemptive Incarnation of God the Son.

These grievous troubles, of course, present a formidable challenge to our daily Christian living. The impact of the crisis in the world and in the Church is profound for all of us. Many are enduring the most painful suffering, physical, emotional and spiritual, which such a situation necessarily causes. At a time when we most need to be close to one another in Christian love, worldly forces would isolate us and have us believe that we are alone and dependent upon secular forces which would make us slaves to their godless and murderous agenda.

But we are not alone. With confidence, we bring our heavy hearts to the Virgin Mother of God, our Mother in the Church. She draws us to her Immaculate Heart, and we come to her on pilgrimage, on the Solemnity of Our Lady of Guadalupe. She speaks to us as she spoke to Saint Juan Diego, when he, too, seemed to be defeated by the deadly illness of his uncle Juan Bernardino, with whom he was living and for whom he was caring, and by the great challenge of taking forward the great work which Our Lady was entrusting to him. To his expressions of helplessness and impossibility, Our Lady responded:

Am I not here, I who have the honor to be your mother? Are you not in my shadow and under my protection? Am I not the source of your joy? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “¿No estoy yo aquí, yo, que tengo el honor de ser tu madre? ¿No estás bajo mi sombra y resguardo? ¿No soy yo la fuente de tu alegría? ¿No estás en el hueco de mi manto, en el cruce de mis brazos?” “El Nican Mopohua,” tr. Instituto Superior de Estudios Guadalupeños, in Carl A. Anderson y Eduardo Chávez, *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Madre de la civilización del amor* (México, D.F.: Random House Mondadori, S.A. de C.V., 2010), p. 220, n. 119. [Nican Mopohua]. English translation: “The Nican Mopohua,” in Carl A. Anderson and Eduardo

She speaks these words to us today.

Mary Immaculate is the woman clothed with sun whose child was destined to save the world from the power of the Evil One. She manifests to us the truth, to which the Book of Revelation testifies that, at the birth of her Divine Son, He “was caught up to God and his throne.”<sup>2</sup> She assures that God the Father indeed has fulfilled, by the Redemptive Incarnation of God the Son, His promise of eternal salvation, the promise renewed through the words of the Prophet Zechariah: “See, I am coming to dwell among you, says the Lord.”<sup>3</sup>

We unite our heavy hearts with the Immaculate Heart of the Mother God, our Mother, whom the Archangel Gabriel rightly addressed “full of grace.”<sup>4</sup> In the midst of so many evils, the Virgin Mother of God receives our hearts and takes them to the source of their healing and strength, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, God and man, God the Son and her Son. She leads us to lift up our hearts to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus in Whom alone we find salvation.

It is for just such trying times as these that Our Lady has desired that her house be built here, in which she draws countless souls to her Son, our Savior, with the words: “Do whatever He tells you.”<sup>5</sup> Her sanctuary here stands as a beacon drawing us to eternal salvation. It is the image of our own calling, of the calling of the universal Church, to be a beacon reflecting brightly the light of divine truth and love in the world, reflecting the reality of Christ seated in glory at the right hand of the Father and, at the same time, dwelling with us in the Church.

Yes, our hearts are understandably heavy, but Christ, through the intercession of His Virgin Mother, lifts up our hearts to His own, renewing our trust in Him Who has promised us eternal salvation in the Church. He will never be unfaithful to His promises. He will never abandon us. Let us not be beguiled by the forces of the world and by false prophets. Let us not abandon Christ and seek our salvation in places where it will never be found. Let us never forget the words by which Our Lady identified herself in her first apparition to Saint Juan Diego:

Know, know for sure my dearest and youngest son, that I am truly the ever perfect Holy Virgin Mary, who has the honor to be the Mother of the one true God for whom we all live, the Creator of people, the Lord of all around us and of what is close to us, the Lord of Heaven, the Lord of

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Chávez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), p. 179, no. 119. [Nican Mopohua Eng].

<sup>2</sup> Rev 12, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Zech 2, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Lk 1, 28.

<sup>5</sup> Jn 2, 5.

Earth.

I want very much that they build my sacred little house here, in which I will show Him, I will exalt Him upon making Him manifest, I will give Him to all the people in all my personal love, Him that is my compassionate gaze, Him that is my help, Him that is my salvation.<sup>6</sup>

May the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe here be always a worthy instrument by which the Immaculate Heart of Mary draws hearts to herself and brings them to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, to the only source of healing and strength in this life and unto eternal life.

Before the Final Blessing, we will have the Induction of Pages and the Knighting of Pages in Our Lady's Knights of the Altar, the boys and young men who serve Our Lord during the Sacred Liturgy in this church. Let us pray, invoking the intercession of Our Lady and of Saint Juan Diego, that Nicholas Kotnour, Michael Row and Thomas Wilson, who are to be inducted as Pages, will persevere in their preparation to become Our Lady's Knights of the Altar, and that Ian Peratt and Charlie Ilfrey, who are to be knighted, will be always faithful to the high mission which they have accepted. May the holiness of their service of Our Lord at the altar, under the guidance and protection of Our Lady, be reflected in every aspect of their daily lives.

Under the loving mantle of the Immaculate Heart of Our Lady of Guadalupe, let us now lift up our heavy hearts to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus. With confidence that Our Lord's promise of salvation to us will be fulfilled, let us give our hearts totally to Him in His holy Church. Let us trust that in His Heart we will find the wisdom and strength to live in these difficult times with our eyes fixed upon Him and upon the salvation which, through the Divine Maternity of the Virgin Mary, He has brings to us in the world.

*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 Joseph, Protector of holy Church, 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.*

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<sup>6</sup> "Sábelo, ten por cierto, hijo mío, el más pequeño, que yo soy en verdad la perfecta siempre Virgen Santa María, que tengo el honor de ser Madre del verdaderísimo Dios por quien se vive, el Creador de las personas, el Dueño de la cercanía y de la inmediateción, el *Dueño del cielo, el Dueño de la tierra.*

Mucho quiero, mucho deseo, que aquí me levanten mi casita sagrada, en donde lo mostraré, lo ensalzaré al ponerlo de manifiesto, lo entregaré a las gentes en todo mi amor personal, a Él que es mi mirada compasiva, a Él que es mi auxilio, a Él que es mi salvación." Nican Mopohua, p. 214, nn. 26-28. English translation: Nican Mopohua Eng, p. 173, nos. 26-28.

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE