

**CHAPEL OF CHRIST THE KING
GUANAJATO, MEXICO
MEMORIAL OF SAINT LUCY, VIRGIN AND MARTYR
DECEMBER 13, 2001**

Homily

Having celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in her Shrine yesterday, we have made pilgrimage today to the Shrine of Christ the King, Son of God and Son of Mary, to whom Our Lady of Guadalupe is constantly leading us. The Mother of God, in her apparitions to Blessed Juan Diego, Bishop Juan de Zumárraga and Juan Bernardino, invites the children of America to place all of their trust in the Child conceived in her womb, Jesus Christ, Godmade- man for our salvation. She invites us to recognize in her Divine Son the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, in which our Lord assures us: "I am the Lord, your God, who grasps your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I will help you'...I will help you, says the Lord, your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel." (Reading I)

At the time of our Lady's apparitions, God's children of what is now Mexico were suffering greatly both from the practices of the native pagan religion and of the Spanish conquerors; they were also suffering the effects of their own sinfulness. The Mother of God, through her messenger Blessed Juan Diego and her permanent apparition on his mantle, invites the people of America to place all their trust in God and in His commandments. In other words, she invites us to submit ourselves completely to the reign of Christ the King, the Holy One of Israel who helps us and guides along the way of life to eternal life. The response was an unimaginable number of conversions to the faith, and the conversion of individual lives through submission to Christ the King.

II. On Monday, we celebrated the glorious victory of Blessed Miguel Agustín Pro in martyrdom, because he entrusted himself totally to Christ the King in opposition to the secular regime which was persecuting Christ in His Church. Blessed Father Pro resisted the secular reign which demanded that he betray Christ and His Church, that he abandon his priestly life and ministry. He trusted in Christ the King and served Him, and chose to die rather than betray that trust.

Today, we celebrate the memory of Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr, who consecrated her life completely to Christ, her Bridegroom and King. When the Roman Emperor Diocletian, in his persecution of Christ in His Church, demanded that she deny the Kingship of Christ in her life, she chose death rather than to betray Christ's reign in her life. In a martyr's death she found true life and gave life to the Church. As her name expresses, she was the light; the light of Christ shone in her and she then became light for others. The many traditions which have developed around her feast day celebrate the beauty of Christ the Light shining forth in her life.

III. The Kingship of Christ, which we celebrate today in the life of Saint Lucy, suffers violence, as Our Lord Jesus instructs us in today's Gospel. Being a servant of Christ the King means suffering the violence of those who resist His reign or who have rejected it. Christ reveals to us the profound truth of our life in Him through His own Passion and Death.

Serving Christ means participation in His Passion and Death, suffering the violence of death to our self and to our selfish tendencies, fighting constantly the inclination to sin, which we have inherited through the sin of our First Parents. Christ, not I, must reign in my life. Christ reigns in my life by the submission of my will to His, by the discipline of my attitude, affections, desires, words and actions, in accord with His Sacred Heart. Rightly we pray each day: "O Sacred Heart of Jesus, make my heart like unto thine."

IV. How can we more fully and firmly establish the reign of Christ in our lives? By enthroning Him as the King of our heart. In fact, we enthrone Christ as Our King each time we receive Him—Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity—in Holy Communion. Our participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass is the offering of our whole life to God the Father, by uniting our life to Christ, submitting our whole being to Him and His Way of the Cross and Resurrection.

Christ, enthroned in our hearts through the Holy Eucharist, must reign in us at all times and in every place in which we find ourselves. Our Lord Jesus has taught us that He dwells with us always in the Church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. (cf. Mt 28; Jn) From the beginning, the Church has understood that her life comes from Christ alone, from His pierced Heart on Calvary. She has understood that Christ the King extends His gentle reign through the graces which flow from His glorious Heart consumed with love for us. In the violence of the struggle with Satan and our inclination to sin, there is always the love of Christ, pouring out from His Sacred Heart, to heal, comfort and sustain us.

To express the reign of Christ the King in our lives and to remind us of the complete submission of our life to His

rule, we enthrone the image of the Sacred Heart in our homes, businesses, schools, places of recreation and other places of our daily activity. Often, too, we carry the image of His Sacred Heart on our person to remind us that we belong completely to Him, that He is with us in the struggle and the battle to be faithful to Him and extend His reign in all things. In whatever we are doing, the love of Christ must rule us. Through the apparitions to Saint Margaret Mary in the seventeenth century, our Lord Jesus asked that we consecrate ourselves to His Sacred Heart and enthrone the image of His Sacred Heart in our homes as the sign of His faithful and enduring love for us and as a reminder of our consecration, especially in times of trial or temptation. The Twelve Promises which He made to those who consecrate their lives to His Sacred Heart express wonderfully the eternal effect—in our lives and in our world—of the gentle reign of Christ.

During the cruel persecution of Christ in His Church in Mexico at the end of the 19th Century and well into the Twentieth Century, the faithful of this beloved land understood that Christ alone was their King, that Christ the King would sustain them in the battle with the forces which demanded that they betray Christ and His rule in their lives. This Shrine of Christ the King, built for the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Mexican nation, stands as a permanent act of faith in God's unfailing love for us in Christ and as a holy place at which those who come here on pilgrimage, either physically or spiritually through prayer, receive the grace to submit their lives more fully to the Kingship of Christ and so to extend His reign in the world, His social reign, by which we built up the civilization of love.

V. Blessed to be on pilgrimage to this sacred place, ask for the grace to submit your life more fully to the gentle reign of Christ the King. Carry Christ, who now comes to us in the Holy Eucharist, into the world, so that He may conquer sin and give His life to all, so that our world may be prepared to be restored to God the Father by Christ at His final Coming.

If you have already consecrated yourself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, renew your consecration today. If not, prepare yourself to make the consecration as a particular fruit of your pilgrimage. If you have already enthroned the Sacred Heart of Jesus in your home, renew the practice of prayer before the image of the Sacred Heart, by which you place your heart completely in the Heart of Christ, by which Christ's love warms the coldness of your heart and purifies your heart of every wrong affection and desire. If you have not enthroned the Sacred Heart in your home, make the resolution to do so when you return home.

VI. As we prepare to receive Christ the King into our midst in the most wonderful way in which He dwells with us in the Church—the Sacrament of His true Body and Blood—let us open our hearts completely to Him. By receiving our Lord into our hearts, may He reign in our lives always.

O Blessed Virgin of Guadalupe, pray for us, that Christ, Your Son and Your King, may be our King to conquer sin in us and to win in us the victory of eternal life.

Saint Lucy, pray for us that the light of Christ may illuminate our thoughts and the love of Christ inflame our hearts, so that we may be His light and love for the world.