

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE  
 SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE  
 LA CROSSE  
 DECEMBER 12, 2012

First Reading: *Zech* 2:14-17  
 Responsorial Psalm: *Jdt* 13:18bcde, 19  
 Second Reading: *Gal* 4:4-7  
 Gospel: *Lk* 1:26-38

**HOMILY**

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

The Lord blesses us to celebrate once again the mystery of the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as the mystery was so wonderfully manifested on our continent to Saint Juan Diego by the Mother of God Herself, from December 9<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> in 1531. The radiantly beautiful Lady who appeared to Juan Diego identified herself immediately as “the perfect ever Virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the most true God through Whom one lives.”<sup>1</sup>

The beautiful Lady was the Virgin Mary whom the Archangel Gabriel, at the Annunciation, addressed with the title, “full of grace,”<sup>2</sup> and to whom He announced:

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,  
 and you shall name him Jesus.

He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,  
 and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,  
 and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,  
 and of his Kingdom there will be no end...

The Holy Spirit will come upon you,  
 and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore the child to be born  
 will be called holy, the Son of God.<sup>3</sup>

In her appearances, in her message and in her image, which God miraculously has left for us on the tilma of Saint Juan Diego, we contemplate the immeasurable and unceasing love of God for us, for all men,

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<sup>1</sup> “la Perfecta siempre Virgen Santa María, Madre del Verdaderísimo Dios por quien se vive.” *Nican Mopohua*, no. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Lk* 1:28.

<sup>3</sup> *Lk* 1:31-33, and 35.

without boundary or discrimination. In the Divine Maternity of Mary, we behold the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to us, through the Prophet Zechariah: God has indeed "stir[red] forth from his holy dwelling"<sup>4</sup> and has come to "dwell among us."<sup>5</sup>

The Mother of God, in her first appearance to Saint Juan Diego, quickly described her maternal love for all of God's children of the great continent of America and far beyond. What is more, by her appearances to Saint Juan Diego and by the mission which she confided to him and, through him, to all of us, she made clear his call and our call to be the heralds of the reality of God's love for all men through the abiding presence of Christ, God the Son Incarnate, in the Church. In a particular way, she asked Saint Juan Diego and she asks us to be one in heart with her Immaculate Heart and thus to draw all our brothers and sisters to the Divine Heart, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced at Christ's death on Calvary and ever open in His glory to receive our hearts, to purify them of sin and to inflame them with Divine Love.

Coming to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe on her feast day, this year, our hearts are heavy with concern for our nation and for our world. Before the great mystery of God's pure and selfless love, we see in our nation and in the world the rejection of His love which alone brings us freedom and peace. In so many ways, our society, instead of responding to God's love with loving obedience, pursues sinful and selfish interests which enslave us in a culture of violence and death. We know with what immeasurable compassion the Mother of God, Our Lady of Guadalupe looks upon our situation, how much she lovingly embraces our nation and our world in the crossing of her maternal arms, and we also know how much she is counting upon us to be the heralds and instruments of the truth and love of her Divine Son in our homes, in our neighborhoods, in our schools, in our nation and in the world.

In Saint Paul's Letter to the Galatians, he reminds us that "God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father'."<sup>6</sup> He reminds us that we are "no longer a slave but a son." In other words, we belong completely to Christ who speaks to our hearts, who speaks to us through our conscience, leading us to do what is good and to avoid what is evil. God has written on every human heart His law, His plan for our eternal happiness as individuals and as a community. He has given us a conscience by which we are able to understand what within us and around us is of God and what is not of God. Through the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe, many consciences were awakened to put an end to the cruel practice of human sacrifice and of unjust treatment of those who are of a different race. So, today, Our

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<sup>4</sup> *Zech* 2:17.

<sup>5</sup> *Zech* 2:15.

<sup>6</sup> *Gal* 4:6.

Lady of Guadalupe stands ever ready to lead us to her Divine Son and to intercede for all of our intentions, so that, in obedience to our conscience, we can overcome the culture of violence and death which threatens to destroy us as individuals and as a society.

The situation of our nation and of the world, which, if it is not changed, will lead to our destruction, can only be changed through the awakening of consciences, through the bringing of hearts to Christ through the work of the Virgin Mary and her messengers. Central to the apparitions of the Mother of God was a careful catechesis on the mystery of God's love. Central to the mission of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe is the catechesis of pilgrims regarding the truth and love of Jesus Christ which alone can overcome the darkness and death which ever more envelop us. Central to the mission of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe is the sound formation of consciences which leads to personal conversion of life and the transformation of society.

We have just begun the Year of Faith, during which our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, asks us to devote ourselves to a deepening knowledge of the faith and to a more ardent living of the faith. Let us pray that the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be a place of pilgrimage for many who seek a deeper knowledge and love of Our Lord alive for us in the Church. Let us pray that the Year of Faith will bring strong grace to the catechetical mission of the Shrine and bring the necessary support for the building of the Father John A. Hardon, S.J., Marian Catechist Apostolate Center and Retreat House.

Before the beginning of today's Holy Mass, I blessed the statue of Blessed John Duns Scotus, Franciscan Friar who lived from around 1265 to 1308. Blessed John Duns Scotus was the first of the great theologians who defended efficaciously the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. Through his contemplation of the mystery of God's love at work in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he came to understand how her vocation and mission of Mother of God made it most fitting that she be given the privilege of enjoying, in advance, the fruits of the Redemption which her Divine Son would win for all men on Calvary. The great mystery of the Immaculate Conception, which God could bring about, he did bring about in the life of the Mother of God because it was most fitting for the greatest mystery, the mystery of the Redemptive Incarnation.<sup>7</sup> Considering the heroic service which Blessed John Duns Scotus has rendered to the Church, I invite you to pray for a miracle in view of his canonization, so that he may be canonized a Saint and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church, and thus ever more efficaciously assist the Church in teaching and living the mysteries of our Catholic faith.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Stefano M. Manelli, F.I., *Blessed John Duns Scotus: Marian Doctor*, tr. Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2011, pp. 17-23, and 83-90.

Coming on pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe to celebrate her feast day, we are deeply conscience of the crisis of faith and morals in our nation and in our world. So many today live as if God did not exist and rebel against His law which He has written upon our hearts. We know that Our Lady, the Mother of God, enfolds our nation and our world in the crossing of her all-loving arms. She draws our hearts to her Immaculate Heart, in order that we may place our hearts totally into the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus. In her maternal love, she knows that only in the Heart of her Divine Son will we be purified of our sins and inflamed to love as He loves, purely and selflessly.

The Spirit of Christ dwelling within us enlightens our consciences, the privileged place in which God speaks to us, so that we know what is right and good, and then have the courage to do it. Our Lady of Guadalupe provided to us a fundamental catechesis on the mystery of God's love at work in our lives, and she called Saint Juan Diego and she calls us to continue that catechesis, giving witness to the truth and love of Christ in our lives, so that others will be drawn to Him Who alone is our salvation. Let us pray that soon the Marian Catechist Center and Retreat House can be built, so that Our Lady can accomplish more efficaciously her work of catechesis in our time.

Coming on pilgrimage to this Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, on our Lady's feast, we ask her to hear our prayers and petitions, and to intercede with her Divine Son on our behalf and on behalf of all who have asked us to pray for them here. Today, in a particular way, I ask you to pray for the intentions of all those who have responded to my annual appeal for support of the Shrine and have sent to me the special intentions which they ask Our Lady, on her feast day, to bring to her Divine Son. Praying through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we can be confident that she, our Mother, hears our prayers and that she presents them to her Divine Son, so that He may heal and strengthen us and those for whom we pray.

Hermanos y hermanas, San Pablo en su Carta a los Gálatas, recuerda a los primeros cristianos y a nosotros que el Espíritu Santo habita en nuestros corazones, nos hace hermanos y hermanas en Cristo y es por ello que nos permite llamar a Dios el Padre: "Abba, Padre". El Espíritu de Cristo habitando entre nosotros ilumina nuestras conciencias, el lugar privilegiado en el cual Dios nos habla, así conocemos lo que es bueno y correcto, por ello tendremos el ánimo de llevarlo a cabo.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe nos ha dado esa catequesis fundamental acerca del misterio del amor Divino que trabaja en nuestras vidas. Ella llamó a San Juan Diego, y ella continúa llamándonos a continuar esa catequesis, dando testimonio de la verdad y del amor de Cristo en nuestras vidas, para que otros sean atraídos ante Él, que es nuestra única Salvación. Ofrezcamos nuestra Oración para que muy

pronto el Centro Mariano de Catequesis y la Casa de Retiros sean construídos, para que Nuestra Señora pueda llevar a cabo de modo eficaz su trabajo de catequesis en nuestro tiempo y en su Santuario.

Antes del inicio de la Santa Misa, he bendecido la estatua del Beato Juan Duns Scoto que se encuentra en la fachada del Convento dedicado a su patrocinio. El Beato Juan Duns Scoto fué el primero de entre los grandes teólogos en presentar y defender eficazmente la verdad acerca de la Inmaculada Concepción de Nuestra Señora. Que él interceda por nosotros, para que unidos nuestros corazones con el Inmaculado Corazón de María pongamos totalmente nuestros corazones en el glorioso y traspasado Corazón de Jesús.

Al venir en peregrinación a éste Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, en la Fiesta de Nuestra Patrona, le pedimos que escuche nuestras plegarias y oraciones, y que interceda ante su Divino Hijo por nosotros y por cada uno de los que nos han pedido orar por sus intenciones aquí en este lugar. En este día, de modo particular, les pido que oremos por todos los que, respondiendo a mi petición anual de apoyo a éste Santuario, han enviado sus especiales intenciones para que sean ofrecidas a Nuestra Señora y a Su Divino Hijo en su fiesta de éste día.

Let us now lift up our hearts, one with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through His Eucharistic Sacrifice. Let us, with Mary Immaculate, Our Lady of Guadalupe, place our hearts totally within His glorious pierced Heart. His Sacred Heart is ever open to receive our hearts, to heal them and make them strong. From His Sacred Heart, let us bring to all of our brothers and sisters, especially to those who suffer most in a culture of violence and death, the immeasurable and unceasing love of God.

*Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of charity, have mercy on us.*

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

*Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary and Patron of the Universal Church, pray for us.*

*Saint Juan Diego, pray for us.*

*Blessed John Duns Scotus, pray for us. Amen.*

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura