

VOTIVE MASS OF SAINT JUAN DIEGO
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
LA CROSSE
JULY 27, 2012

First Reading: *Zeph* 2:3; 3:12-13 [737, 18]

Responsorial Psalm: *Ps* 15:2-3a, 3bc-4ab, 5 [739, 2]

Alleluia Verse: *Mt* 23:11, 12b [741, 6]

Gospel: *Mt* 18:1-5 [742, 4]

HOMILY

Praised be Jesus Christ, now and for ever.

Blessed to gather again as the Queen of the Americas Guild, we, together with Saint Juan Diego, look into the eyes of the Mother of God, and she looks into our eyes as she looked into the eyes of Saint Juan Diego from the moment of their first encounter on Tepeyac Hill in the early morning of December 9, 1531. Saint Juan Diego is our model in seeking the face of Our Lady of Guadalupe and, as our brother in the Communion of Saints, he intercedes for us, so that we may always enjoy the grace of looking into the eyes of the Mother of God, our Mother in Christ in His Mystical Body, the Church. The apparitions of the Mother of God, under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in fact, were directed to an enduring face-to-face encounter with her, for God not only granted us the favor of her appearances from December 9th through 12th of 1531 but also the favor of her abiding miraculous image on the tilma of Saint Juan Diego.

How could we ever pretend to be worthy to look upon the face of Our Lady of Guadalupe or to come before her image, so that she may look into our eyes? Like Saint Juan Diego, we rightly consider ourselves unworthy to come before Our Lady, let alone to serve as her messenger of the immeasurable mercy of God in our midst by the Incarnation of God the Son in her womb through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. Saint Juan Diego provides the answer to our perplexity, the answer found in the words of Our Lord in the Gospel.

It is by way of humility of heart, of poverty of spirit, that we not only go with confidence to Our Lady but also, through her, to her Divine Son. It is by recognizing that we depend completely upon God for all that we are and have that we also have the courage to come before Our Lady as her spiritual children so that she can direct us to her Son with her

perennial maternal counsel: “Do whatever he tells you.”¹ It is by putting aside our pretense of being great and important, that our eyes are opened to see our true dignity, the way of greatness for us: “Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven.”²

Only when we turn to Christ through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, only when we give our hearts, with childlike trust, to the Heart of Jesus, do we recognize our sins, repent of them, and seek confidently the grace of salvation at the only font of eternal life, the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus. What Our Lord promised to the remnant of His people, those who remained true to Him after the others had turned away from Him in pride, He also promises to us:

They shall do no wrong
and speak no lies;
Nor shall there be found in their mouths
a deceitful tongue;
They shall pasture and couch their flocks
with none to disturb them.³

If we are humble enough to recognize in the Lord the truth and love which our minds and hearts so much seek, then His grace will never fail to flow from His glorious pierced Heart into our poor, fearful, doubtful, and sinful hearts to transform them, healing them of all sin and inflaming them with divine love.

Saint Juan Diego shows us the way of spiritual childhood, of humility before the Lord and confident conversion of our hearts to Him. It is the way which Our Lady, with maternal love, teaches us day by day. Drawing our hearts to her Immaculate Heart she brings our hearts to the Heart of her Divine Son in which, by the miracle of divine grace, they can be purified of sin and made ever more like His Heart, seeking truth and love in all things. Saint Juan Diego, gazing upon the face of the Virgin of Guadalupe, looking into her eyes, understood the way and had the courage to set out upon it. So, too, remaining always close to the Virgin Mary, seeking always to look into her eyes, we will know the way and will have the courage to set out upon it.

May our days together as the Queen of the Americas Guild be lived under the loving

¹ *Jn* 2:5.

² *Mt* 18:3.

gaze of the Virgin of Guadalupe, be spent looking into her eyes. So may these days be rich in the graces of humility before God and of confidence in His never failing mercy.

Let us now lift up our poor, fearful, doubtful, and sinful hearts to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, ever opened anew for us in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. With Saint Juan Diego, let us seek the company of the Virgin Mary, let us seek her face, let us draw near to her Immaculate Heart. One in heart with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, let us give our hearts completely into the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In His Heart, as Our Lady never fails to teach us, our hearts will be transformed, will be cleansed of all our foolish pride and will be made rich in humble love of God and of our neighbor.

*Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, have mercy on us!
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America and Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us!
Saint Juan Diego, pray for us!*

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

³ Zeph 3:13.