John Duns Scotus

A powerful tower rising to Heaven as a testimony of faith

CONNECTION TO OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

Explaining the connection between Blessed Scotus and Our Lady of Guadalupe, Father Peter Fehlner recalls for us that Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Saint Juan Diego on December 9, 1531, which was at that time the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Therefore, promoting devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe was and still is a way to come to know and to love her Son, present in her Immaculate Womb.

The Franciscans who did so much to promote devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe in the 16th century were all trained in the philosophy and theology of Duns Scotus. This training was important then for the recognition of who Our Lady of Guadalupe was and why she came to ‘mediate’ as Mother. So, too, is it important today, especially in North America, to re-recognize the importance of this Shrine and to make it a goal of pilgrimage.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT BLESSED JOHN DUNS SCOTUS?

Blessed Scotus was born in Scotland sometime between late 1265 and early 1266. As a boy, Blessed Scotus wanted to study and immerse himself in the truths of the Faith, but his mind was such that he understood little or nothing. So, he turned to Our Lady in prayer, begging her to open his mind. Her Motherly heart was so moved by his tears that she obtained for him the healing of his mind.

Endowed with sublime intelligence, Blessed Scotus later took the Franciscan habit in 1280. As a young friar, he began the study of philosophy and then theology at the Franciscan College at Oxford University and soon assumed the responsibility of professor. Scotus was ordained a priest on March 17, 1291. From that moment, the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the art par excellence in the whole Church, became the center of his life.

The body of Scotus’ theological writings present the rich treasures of the Holy Eucharist, the Real Presence, and our Immaculate Mother. It was during his time as professor at Oxford that he taught the truth of Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception.

Later in 1291, Scotus was sent to continue his studies at the prestigious University of Paris, the Sorbonne. There, he showed himself to be a humble and brilliant defender of Mary Immaculate.

Blessed John Duns Scotus accepted the challenge. On his way from the friary to the University, he stopped before a statue of Our Lady, raised his eyes to her and prayed that he be given strength against the enemy. As she had answered his plea when a young boy, Our Lady responded to Scotus with a bow of her head as if to say, “Yes, I give you all my strength.”

Drawing from the mysterious depths of Sacred Scripture, Blessed John Duns Scotus clearly responded to each argument. Proving the privilege of Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception, and thus her role as Mediatrix of all grace, the academic body at the Sorbonne changed its position.

Toward the end of the year 1307, Blessed Scotus was transferred to the University of Cologne. There, too, he showed himself to be a humble and brilliant defender of Mary Immaculate.

THE WRITINGS OF BLESSED JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

A gifted Franciscan theologian, Blessed John Duns Scotus is known as the Subtle and Marian Doctor. Throughout his writings, Blessed Scotus teaches us the primacy of love in theology. Everything is ordered to love, and in love everything is perfected.

The most perfect revelation of this divine love is the absolute primacy of Jesus and Mary.

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