

MASS OF DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH AND ALTAR OF SACRIFICE
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, LA CROSSE
JULY 31, 2008

FINAL REMARKS

1A. Before the Final Blessing and Dismissal, I express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you who have come to pray for an abundant outpouring of the grace of the Holy Spirit through the Rite of the Dedication of the Church of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Altar of Sacrifice. It is my prayer that the Virgin of Guadalupe will watch over and guard you always, interceding for your intentions and the intentions of those for whom you have prayed and will pray at her shrine.

1B. Antes de la Bendición Final y de la Despedida, expreso mi más sentido agradecimiento a todos ustedes que han venido a orar para que el Espíritu Santo derrame de manera abundante su gracia por medio del Rito de Dedicación de la Iglesia del Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y del Altar de Sacrificio. Es mi oración que la Virgen de Guadalupe siempre vele sobre ustedes y los guarde. Que ella interceda por sus intenciones y las intenciones de aquellos por quienes ustedes han orado y por aquellos por quienes ustedes orarán en su santuario.

2A. His Eminence, Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera, the Archbishop of Mexico City and Primate of Mexico, regrets very much that he was unable to be with us today, as he had earlier hoped to be. As a token of the closest spiritual union of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City and Our Lady's newest shrine here, Cardinal Rivera has sent a piece of the rock of the Hill of Tepeyac, which will be encased in the church near the statue of Saint Juan Diego. I am happy to show you now this piece of the stony hill on which the Mother of God deigned to visit our continent in all of her abundant love of us. In addition, His Eminence has given to our shrine a beautiful statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Saint Juan Diego.

2B. Su Eminencia, Norberto Cardinal Rivera Carrera, el Arzobispo de Ciudad de México y el

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Primado de México, lamenta mucho que no pudiera estar con nosotros hoy, como anteriormente lo había esperado hacer. Como símbolo de la más cercana unión espiritual entre el Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en la Ciudad de México y este nuevo santuario a Nuestra Señora aquí, el Cardinal Rivera ha enviado un pedazo de piedra de la Colina de Tepeyac. Esta será localizada en la iglesia cerca de la estatua de San Juan Diego. Me alegra mostrarle ahora este pedazo de la colina pedegrosa en la cual la Madre de Dios decidió visitar nuestro continente en todo su abundante amor por nosotros. Además, Su Eminencia le ha dado a nuestro santuario una hermosa imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y San Juan Diego.

3. As we have been blessed to dedicate today the heart of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, our thoughts turn to our universal pastor, Pope Benedict XVI, who safeguards and fosters the unity of the faith and its practice in the Church. I express deepest gratitude to His Holiness for his blessing of the work of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe at La Crosse, and I pledge to him the prayers of the faithful who come here on pilgrimage, that our Lord conserve him in wisdom and strength for his apostolic ministry to the universal Church.

4. We are most deeply honored by the presence of His Eminence Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, and His Eminence, Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia. Knowing of your many and weighty responsibilities in your large archdioceses and in the universal Church, words are not adequate to express our gratitude for the generosity of your presence with us, which certainly has blessed, in a most particular way, the spiritual work of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

5. I thank, too, the other Archbishops and Bishops who have concelebrated the Mass of Dedication. Your sacrifice to travel to La Crosse, in order to participate in the Mass of Dedication, is most deeply appreciated. A most special word of gratitude to the Bishops who assisted with the anointing of the church with Sacred Chrism: Archbishop Timothy Dolan of Milwaukee, and Bishop Jerome ListECKI, our local Bishop, who are currently members of the Board of Directors of the Shrine; and Bishop Allen VIGNERON of the Diocese of Oakland, who

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was a member of the first Board of Directors of the Shrine.

6. My heartfelt gratitude extends also to all of the priests who have concelebrated the Mass of Dedication. It is my hope that you will have frequent occasion to return to the Shrine and also to lead the faithful on pilgrimage here. May the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe be a source of much inspiration and consolation to you in your priestly life and ministry.

7. With particular gratitude, I recognize the Friars of the Immaculate, their Superior General, Father Stefano M. Manelli; the first Rector of the Shrine, Father Peter Damien M. Fehlner; and the other Friars missioned by Father Manelli to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. I am most deeply grateful for the generous response of the Friars of the Immaculate to my invitation that they accept the responsibility for the daily spiritual care of the pilgrims, especially through the offering of the Holy Mass and the hearing of confessions.

8. In thanking the Friars of the Immaculate, I thank also all of the consecrated persons present, consecrated virgins and hermits, monks, and consecrated religious. In your total gift of self to Christ, and in your spiritual union with His Mother and our Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, please continue to pray for God's blessing upon the important spiritual work of the Shrine. With particular affection, I thank the Sisters of Saint Francis of the Martyr Saint George who have prayed for and supported the work of the Shrine, from its inception. I publicly thank Mother M. Regina Pacis, the Provincial Superior of the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Province, and her Council for missioning Sister Christa Marie to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in order that she may serve in the key position of Executive Director.

9. I thank the permanent deacons present, especially the deacons who have assisted in the Rite of Dedication of the Church and of the Altar. From the very beginning of the Shrine, permanent deacons have offered their generous service to its spiritual work. I am most pleased that Deacon Joseph Richards is on the permanent staff of the Shrine. Deacon Richards and Deacon Matthew Ludick have assisted me today.

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10. I recognize, too, all of the seminarians present, especially Deacons Victor Feltes and Gregory Michaud, and all of the religious in formation. The Shrine has already shown itself to be a place rich in grace for vocational discernment. May Our Lady of Guadalupe help you to know clearly and to do courageously whatever Christ is asking of you.

11. All of us owe a great debt of gratitude to Sister Christa Marie, Executive Director of the Shrine, to her staff and to the many volunteers who have assisted in the preparation of the Mass of Dedication, and who sustain the work of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, on a daily basis. As Founder of the Shrine and President of the Board of Directors, I have a deep appreciation for all of the many details to which Sister Christa Marie and her staff have devoted themselves, especially during these last months. Let us pray that God reward them abundantly for their selfless service to the Mother of God at her holy place.

12. I thank, too, the members of the Board of Directors of the Shrine, who have faithfully and generously sustained the direction of the Shrine's important spiritual work.

13. We would not be here today, celebrating with so much joy the Mass of Dedication, were it not for the work of the architects and engineers, the general contractor and subcontractors, and their staffs; and the dedicated service of many artists and artisans. To all who have had any part in the building of this most beautiful House of God and House of the Church, I express our deepest gratitude. May God bless you for the holy work in which you have had an irreplaceable part.

14. We also would not be here today without the generous and steadfast support of countless benefactors. The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe at La Crosse, from its inception, has depended solely upon the gifts of those dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe and to providing for her a shrine and church in North America, to which her children of North America and of every place could come on pilgrimage, and in which she could manifest to them the unfathomable mercy and love of God.

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15. A most particular debt of gratitude is owed to Mary Lucille Swing and her family who have made the gift of the most beautiful land for the Shrine. The late Robert Swing, Mary Lucille's husband, hoped that this beautiful site could, one day, serve the spiritual good of others. His good wife and family have most generously helped to realize his vision.

16. To all of you who have sacrificed and continue to sacrifice from your substance for the work of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I express the deepest gratitude of the faithful who have already come on pilgrimage and will come on pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe, in order to encounter, with her unfailing maternal help, her Divine Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Your sacrifices are bearing and will continue to bear spiritual fruits which you may never know but which will redound to the salvation of countless souls.

17. The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, which remains, of course, the ultimate goal of every pilgrim who wishes to visit Our Lady of Guadalupe, has always been most supportive of the work of the Shrine. I express my heartfelt gratitude, in particular, to Monsignor Diego Monroy Ponce, Vicar General and Episcopal Vicar of Guadalupe, and the Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Mexico City.

18. I gratefully note, too, the generous collaboration of other works and associations, dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, in the work of the Shrine. In particular, I note the generous collaboration and support of the Queen of the Americas Guild, founded in 1979, for the purpose of spreading knowledge of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe and devotion to Our Lady. The Guild is highly and well represented today by the presence of His Excellency, the Most Reverend Joseph Madera, the Episcopal Moderator; Mr. Frank Smoczynski, the President of the Board of Directors, and his wife, Beverly; Mr. Stephen Banaszak, the Vice President; and Rebecca Nichols, the National Coordinator. Sister Christa Marie serves as the Secretary of the Guild, which is an indication of the close collaboration of the Guild with the work of the Shrine.

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19. In the name of us all, I express gratitude to those who have prepared the sacred liturgy for the day and who have assisted us all in celebrating so fittingly the Mass of Dedication, especially Monsignor Henry Breier and Father Thomas Keller, the Masters of Ceremonies; Abbé Chad Templin of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, and Brother Joseph of the Friars of the Immaculate, and the seminarians and Sisters of Saint Francis of the Martyr Saint George; the lectors and the servers; and the ushers.

20. Thank you, Dr. Brian Luckner, for the preparation and direction of the Sacred Music for today's celebration. Dr. Luckner who is the Director of Sacred Music for the Shrine, in addition to his primary duties with the Cathedral Parish and the Diocese of La Crosse, wrote a number of original musical scores for the particular texts of the Rite of Dedication. He is also the organist for today's Mass. Thank you, from the heart, Dr. Luckner, and thanks to all of the choir members and instrumentalists who have helped us to lift up our minds and hearts to God in fitting worship.

21. I express deepest gratitude to Eternal Word Television Network for its collaboration in bringing today's celebration to so many throughout the world. A special word of thanks to Deacon Bill Steltemeier and Raymond Arroyo of Eternal Word Television Network, and to Father C. Eugene Morris, priest of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis.

22. Immediately following the Mass, there will be a reception on the grounds of the Pilgrim's Center. You are warmly welcomed to take part in the reception and to continue to enjoy the great blessing of the Dedication of the Church of the Shrine.

23A. Please continue to be one with me in praying for and working for the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Please pray for all of the pilgrims who will come here, that God will bless them abundantly through their pilgrimage.

23B. Por favor sigan unidos a mi en la oración y servicio por el Santuario de Nuestra Señora de

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Guadalupe. Les pido por favor que oren por todos los peregrinos que llegarán aquí, que el Señor los bendiga abundantemente por medio de sus peregrinaciones.

Que Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y su fiel mensajero, San Juan Diego, siempre intercedan por nosotros y por nuestras intenciones en este santo lugar.

¡Que Dios los bendiga a todos, y les conceda un viaje seguro hoy y siempre!

¡Que Viva La Virgen de Guadalupe! ¡Que Viva!

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May Our Lady of Guadalupe and her faithful messenger, Saint Juan Diego, intercede for us and our intentions always in this holy place.

God bless you all, and grant you safe journey today and always!