

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
 SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
 LA CROSSE
 DECEMBER 12, 2011

First Reading: *Zech* 2:14-17
 Responsorial Psalm: *Jdt* 13:18bcde, 19
 Second Reading: *Rv* 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab
 Gospel: *Lk* 1:26-38

HOMILY

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

When Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Saint Juan Diego, on this day in 1531, she called him “my littlest son,”¹ and she identified herself as “the perfect ever Virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the most true God through Whom one lives.”² Her words expressed the deepest reality of Juan Diego’s being. Indeed, he is her son because he came to life in her Divine Son. God the Father, in His immeasurable and unceasing love, had adopted Juan Diego as His son, in His only-begotten Son, through the Sacrament of Baptism. Through the Sacrament of Baptism, Juan Diego had been cleansed of the sin, by which our First Parents renounced their origin and destiny in God, and he had been filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, participating in the very life and love of God the Father and God the Son. Mary calls Juan Diego her littlest son both to express her most tender maternal love for him and to recognize his humility, his profound sense of total dependence upon God.

Juan Diego is the son of the Virgin Mary because she is the Mother of God. It is she who, preserved by God from every stain of the sin of our First Parents from the very first moment of life, conceived God the Son in our human flesh by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, brought Him to birth at Bethlehem, and cared for Him with complete and enduring maternal love, becoming His first and best disciple. God the Father created her perfect by her Immaculate Conception, so that she might bring to birth God the Son Who alone is our life and salvation. It is through Him alone that we live, both during the days of our earthly pilgrimage and, one day, eternally in Heaven, the final destiny of our life pilgrimage. Saint Paul announces

¹ “hijo mío el menor.” *Nican Mopohua*, no. 23.

² “la Perfecta siempre Virgen Santa María, Madre del Verdaderísimo Dios por quien se vive.” *Nican Mopohua*, no. 26.

the truth which made possible the apparition of the Virgin Mary to Juan Diego. “God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”³ Because we are truly the adopted sons of God, with the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, as our mother, we call God “Abba, Father,” with the confidence of a dearest son, of an “heir” of eternal life.⁴

Mary appears to Juan Diego in all of the spiritual beauty which she manifested at the moment of the Annunciation, the moment in which, by God’s call and her obedient response, God the Son first began to dwell with us, in her womb, for our eternal salvation. Contemplating the account of the Annunciation, we understand the deep significance of the relationship of the Mother of God with Saint Juan Diego, her “littlest son,” and with all of us who, like Saint Juan Diego, are her dearest children. The Virgin Mary is “full of grace,”⁵ that is, there is not the slightest taint of sin upon her soul, so that she may conceive and bring to birth a son, God the Son Incarnate, Jesus, the long-awaited Son of David who “will rule over the house of Jacob forever” and of whose “Kingdom there will be no end.”⁶

At the moment of the Annunciation, God fulfilled perfectly what He had promised through the Prophet Zechariah: “See, I am coming to dwell among you, says the LORD.”⁷ God the Son first came to dwell with us in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Having offered up His Body, received in the womb of the Virgin Mary, on Calvary for the salvation of all men, He rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. From His place at the Father’s right hand, He never ceases to pour forth, from His glorious pierced Heart, the grace of the Holy Spirit, without measure, into our souls. This is the great mystery of God’s mercy which Our Lady of Guadalupe has come to manifest to us, so that we may find our joy in its only source, her Divine Son.

A particular manifestation of the immeasurable and unceasing love of God for us in the Church is the gift of an indulgence for the remission of the temporal punishment due to our sins. We know that, once we have confessed our sins and received absolution, we must seek the remission of the temporal punishment to which we are rightly subject because of our sins. In a

³ *Gal* 4:4-5.

⁴ *Gal* 4:6-7.

⁵ *Lk* 1:28.

⁶ *Lk* 1:33.

⁷ *Zech* 2:14.

particular way, we are conscious of the souls in Purgatory who, through their suffering, are being purified of the temporal punishment due to their sins.

Christ, alive for us in the Church, has given to Saint Peter and to his successors the power of binding and loosing. It is thus that the Church “intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishment due for their sins.”⁸ Those of us who are yet on earthly pilgrimage to our heavenly destiny show a special measure of our love for our suffering brothers and sisters in Purgatory by obtaining for them the indulgence, which they are unable to attain for themselves. Our prayer for the souls in Purgatory is the highest expression of our love for them, with whom we have communion in the Church. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us:

Since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them, so that the temporal punishments due for their sins may be remitted.⁹

In their love for us, the souls in Purgatory pray for us, and, in our love for them, we pray for them and seek, for them, the indulgence by which the treasure of the merits of Christ and the saints is opened for the remission of the temporal punishment due to their sins.

In May of this year, our Holy Father made a generous grant of indulgences on behalf of pilgrims to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe here and on behalf of the poor souls for whom they pray, while on pilgrimage here. I urge you to learn about the indulgences which are able to be granted to you here for your salvation and the salvation of beloved souls in Purgatory.

Estimados hermanos y hermanas, la Virgen de Guadalupe se ha aparecido en nuestro continente para mostrarnos la misericordia de Dios, la cual es sin medida y sin fin. En sus primeras palabras a San Juan Diego, Ella declaró:

Yo en verdad soy vuestra madre compasiva, tuya y de todos los hombres que en esta tierra estáis en uno, y de las demás variadas estirpes de hombres, mis amadores, los que a mí clamen, los que me busquen, los que confíen en mí,

⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1478.

⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1479.

porque ahí les escucharé su llanto, su tristeza, para remediar, para curar todas sus diferentes penas, sus miserias, sus dolores.¹⁰

En su primera aparición, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe pidió expresamente que fuera construida una capilla, para que los peregrinos pudieran llegar en peregrinación a visitarla y, a través de su peregrinar, conocieran la infinita misericordia de Dios en sus vidas. A través de su imagen, la cual por la mano de Dios, permanece con nosotros en la *tilma* sagrada de San Juan Diego, Nuestra Señora continúa a manifestarnos la misericordia de Dios en nuestras vidas, especialmente en los tiempos de sufrimiento y problemas.

Llegando en peregrinación a este Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, en su día Solemne, le pedimos que escuche nuestras plegarias y peticiones, que interceda ante Su Divino Hijo en nuestro favor y en favor de todos aquellos que nos han pedido una oración por ellos aquí. En este día, de un modo particular, les pido que rueguen por las intenciones de todos aquellos que han respondido generosamente a mi solicitud en favor de este Santuario y me han enviado sus intenciones especiales, ya que ellos solicitan a la Virgen, en su día de fiesta, que las ponga a su vez ante su Divino Hijo. Nuestra Señora nos responde, tal como Ella respondió a San Juan Diego que estaba preocupado por su moribundo tío Juan Bernardino:

Escucha, ponlo en tu corazón hijo mío el menor, que no sea nada lo que te espante, lo que te afligió, que no se perturbe tu rostro, tu corazón; no temas esta enfermedad, ni ninguna otra cosa punzante, aflictiva.

¿No estoy aquí, yo, que soy tu madre? ¿No estás bajo mi sombra y resguardo?
¿No soy la fuente de tu alegría? ¿No estás en el hueco de mi manto, en el cruce de mis brazos? ¿Tienes necesidad de alguna otra cosa?

Que ninguna otra cosa te aflija, te perturbe; que no te apriete con pena la enfermedad de tu tío, porque de ella no morirá por ahora. Ten por cierto que ya está bueno.¹¹

Orando e implorando la intercesión de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, nosotros podemos estar confiados de que Ella, Nuestra Madre, escucha nuestras plegarias y que Ella las presenta ante Su Divino Hijo, para que El pueda ayudarnos y fortalecernos así como a aquellos por quienes rezamos.

¹⁰ *Nican Mopohua*, nos. 29-32.

¹¹ *Nican Mopohua*, nos. 118-120.

De un modo muy particular, en nuestro peregrinar, le pedimos a Nuestra Señora que interceda por la remisión del castigo temporal que merecemos debido a nuestras faltas y por aquellas almas que están en el Purgatorio debido a sus propias faltas. Nuestras oraciones por aquellas almas que están en el Purgatorio, es la máxima expresión de nuestro amor hacia ellas, con quienes tenemos comunión en la Iglesia. *El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* nos recuerda:

Puesto que los fieles difuntos en vía de purificación son también miembros de la misma comunión de los santos, podemos ayudarles, entre otras formas, obteniendo para ellos indulgencias, de manera que se vean libres de las penas temporales debidas por sus pecados.¹²

En su amor hacia nosotros, las almas en el Purgatorio ruegan por nosotros, y en nuestro amor hacia ellas, nosotros rogamos por ellas, y buscamos la indulgencia por la cual el tesoro de los méritos de Cristo y los santos se abre por la remisión de la pena temporal debida a sus pecados.¹³

En mayo de este año, el Santo Padre ha generosamente otorgado indulgencias en favor de los fieles peregrinos que llegan a este Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y de aquellos por los que ofrezcan una Oración. Les pido encarecidamente que profundizen acerca de las indulgencias que pueden ser concedidas a ustedes aquí en favor de su salvación y de la salvación de las benditas Animas del Purgatorio.

Yo deseo que reciban toda clase de bendiciones con motivo de esta Solemnidad de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, la cual los cuide y proteja. Ella les muestre siempre la constante misericordia sin medida de Dios y les lleve a conocer intensamente el profundo amor de su Divino Hijo.

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. Our Lady responds to us, as she responded to Saint Juan Diego who was filled with concern for his dying uncle, Juan Bernardino:

¹² *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, n. 1479.

¹³ *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, n. 1478.

Listen, put it into your heart, my littlest son, that what disturbs you is nothing, that what afflicts you does not disturb your countenance, your heart; do not fear this illness, nor any other painful things.

Am I not here, I who am your Mother? Are you not under my gaze and protection? Am I not the source of your joy? Are you not in the fold of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do you need anything else?

Let no other thing afflict you, disturb you; nor the illness of your uncle oppress you with suffering, because he will not die from it now. Be certain that he is already well.¹⁴

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.

I wish for you a most blessed celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. May Our Lady watch over and protect you. May she show you always the immeasurable and unceasing mercy of God by leading you to a deeper knowledge and love of her Divine Son.

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 place our hearts totally within His glorious pierced Heart, 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 the poor souls in Purgatory, the immeasurable and unceasing love of God the Father.

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. Amen.

Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke
Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura

¹⁴ *Nican Mopohua*, nos. 118-120.