

MASS FOR THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH  
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE  
LA CROSSE  
JULY 31, 2014

Ezek 43, 1-2, 3c-7a  
Ps 84, 3. 4. 5. 10. 11  
Heb 12, 18-19. 22-24  
2 Chron 7, 16  
Lk 19, 1-10

### HOMILY

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

The Gospel account of the meeting of Our Lord with the public sinner Zacchaeus opens our minds to contemplate the great wonder of today's celebration of the sixth anniversary of the solemn dedication of this church. Zacchaeus, notwithstanding his grievously sinful condition, was, in the depth of his heart, attracted to Our Lord. For all of his most serious sins, Zacchaeus honestly recognized God's Law written upon his heart and, at the cost of no little humiliation, obeyed his conscience which was drawing him to Jesus. He humbled himself before those who judged him harshly and who later complained about the attention which Our Lord gave to him, a notorious sinner. He, a powerful tax collector, lowered himself to climb a tree, in order to respond to the promptings of his conscience and, thereby, encounter Our Lord. When the eyes of Our Lord met the eyes of Zacchaeus, Our Lord immediately called Zacchaeus to Himself and insisted on accompanying him to his home.

A través de éste encuentro con Nuestro Señor, Zaqueo recibió la gracia de la conversión de vida. Se arrepintió de sus muchos y graves pecados, y el suplicó hacer lo todo lo posible por reparar todo el mal que había hecho. Zaqueo declaró a Nuestro Señor: "Señor, doy la mitad de mis bienes a los pobres; y si a alguien he defraudado en algo, le devuelvo el cuádruplo."<sup>1</sup> Nuestro Señor respondió, dejando en claro que el misterio de la gracia divina trabajaba en el corazón de Zaqueo: "Hoy ha venido la salvación a ésta casa, por cuanto ése es

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<sup>1</sup> Lk 19, 8.

también hijo de Abraham; pues el Hijo del hombre ha venido a buscar y salvar lo que estaba perdido.”<sup>2</sup>

Cuando nosotros venimos a éste templo, nosotros, como Zaqueo, damos una respuesta a la ley de Dios que se encuentra escrita en nuestros corazones, la que nos anima a tener un encuentro con Dios, confesar nuestros pecados y ofrecerle nuestra humilde oración. Como Zaqueo nosotros deseamos ver a Nuestro Señor. En consecuencia nosotros no quedaremos defraudados, ya que Nuestro Señor fielmente desciende desde Su trono celestial hacia un encuentro con nosotros aquí y derrama en nuestros corazones, en abundancia, los siete dones del Espíritu Santo. Él nos purifica de nuestro pecado y nos fortalece para amar a Dios y a nuestro prójimo como Cristo ama. Nuestro Señor verdaderamente llega para morar en nuestros templos “a buscar y salvar lo que estaba perdido.”<sup>3</sup>

Let us deepen a bit our reflection on the tremendous grace which is ours to celebrate the anniversary of the solemn dedication of this church. Dom Prosper Guéranger, the great teacher of the life of prayer and worship in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, begins his commentary on the dedication of churches with the words of the invitatory antiphon of the Divine Office, “Holiness befits the house of God: let us adore in it Christ Her Spouse” (“*Domum Dei decet sanctitudo: Sponsum eius Christum adoremus in ea*”). He asks the question: “What is this mystery of a house that is at the same time a bride?”<sup>4</sup> He responds, reflecting on the awesome reality of every church dedicated to God the Father by His Divine Son through Their Holy Spirit. The church building is inseparably connected with the Church Herself, His Mystical Body and Bride. Let us listen to Dom Guéranger’s response:

Our churches are holy because they belong to God, and on account of the celebration of the holy Sacrifice therein, and the prayer and praise offered to the divine Guest who dwells there. More truly than the figurative tabernacle or the ancient temple, they are separated solemnly and for ever by their dedication from all the dwellings of men, and exalted far above all earthly palaces.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Lc 19, 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> Lc 19, 10.

<sup>4</sup> “Quel est le mystère de cette *maison* en même temps *épouse* ?,” Prosper Guéranger, *L’Année liturgique, Le temps après la Pentecôte*, Tome VI, 11<sup>ème</sup> éd. (Tours : Maison Alfred Mame et Fils, 1925), p. 258. [Hereafter, AL] English translation : Prosper Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year, Time after Pentecost*, Book VI, tr. The Benedictines of Stanbrook Abbey (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2000), p. 211. [Hereafter, ALEng]

<sup>5</sup> “Saintes, nos églises le sont par leur appartenance à Dieu, par la célébration du Sacrifice, par la prière et la

Dom Guéranger reminds us that the building itself, even though it is solemnly consecrated, remains “devoid of feeling and life.”<sup>6</sup> The physical structure, once consecrated, directs our minds and hearts to the reality that Christ, seated in glory at the right hand of the Father, is alive for us in the Church, is here in this church, ever seeking our love, our eternal salvation.

It is in the church building, above all, that we encounter the great Mystery of Faith by which the Risen and Ascended Christ continues to pour out from His glorious pierced Heart the wondrous gifts of His immeasurable and ceaseless love, above all through the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The church building is full of “feeling and life” because it is the place in which Christ comes to meet us, in order to free us from sin and everlasting death, and to give us a share in His own life, the life of Holy Trinity, the life He shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Referring once again to the church building Dom Guéranger declares:

The principal glory of the noble edifice will be to symbolize those great realities. Under the shelter of its roof the human race will be initiated into ineffable secrets, the mystery whereof will be consummated in another world in the noonday light of heaven.<sup>7</sup>

In the church building, in virtue of the Rite of Solemn Dedication, heaven meets earth. The sacred rites celebrated in the church signify our heavenly destiny and are, in fact, a participation in the worship of God, which will be perfectly ours in Heaven at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb.<sup>8</sup>

En éste Templo, la visión del Profeta Ezequiel acerca del templo restaurado después de su destrucción se lleva a total cumplimiento. En la visión, Ezequiel contempla la gloria del Señor entrar en el nuevo templo acompañada de las más poderosas manifestaciones en la tierra. Él nos narra que fue “como un estrépito de caudalosas aguas, y la tierra resplandecía del resplandor de la gloria [del Señor].”<sup>9</sup> La tierra misma no podía quedar quieta y en silencio ante la realidad de Dios que viene a morar en medio de Sus hijos, creados a su imagen y

louange offertes en elles à l'hôte divin. A meilleur titre que le tabernacle figuratif ou l'ancien temple, leur dédicace les a solennellement, pour toujours, séparées de toute demeure d'hommes, élevées au-dessus de tout palais de la terre.” AL, p. 258. English translation : ALEng, p. 211.

<sup>6</sup> “... dépourvues de sentiment et de vie.” AL, p. 258. English translation : ALEng, p. 211.

<sup>7</sup> “La principale gloire du noble édifice sera d'en symboliser la grandeur. L'humanité s'initiera sous l'ombre de ses voûtes à d'ineffables secrets, dont le mystère se consommera par delà le monde, au plein jour du ciel.” AL, pp. 258-259. English translation : ALEng, p. 211.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Lk 22, 15-18; Rv 19, 7-9.

<sup>9</sup> Ez 43, 2.

semejanza, con el propósito de salvarlos para estar en comunión eterna con Él. La voz divina en la visión deja en claro la verdad por la cual los signos de la tierra se mostraban. En el pináculo de la visión, Dios declaró a Ezequiel:

Hijo de hombre, éste es el lugar de mi trono,  
 el escabel de las plantas de mis pies;  
 donde habitaré para siempre en medio de los hijos de Israel.<sup>10</sup>

La restauración del antiguo templo sería sin duda para los hijos de Dios un signo de Su presencia permanente con ellos, puesto que el templo fue el lugar privilegiado de oración y sacrificio, el lugar de encuentro con la gloria de Dios.

Pero el antiguo templo, de hecho, esperaba el momento en que la gloria de Dios en su plenitud pudiera estar con el hombre, la gloria que es nada menos que la presencia viva del Señor entre nosotros. Los fieles de Israel, cuando ellos se reunían en el templo, siempre lo hicieron llenos de esperanza en la realidad de que ahí había un signo poderoso, la realidad de su salvación, cuando el Señor mismo sin duda pusiera las plantas de sus pies entre ellos para permanecer con ellos eternamente. Así como las palabras llenas de inspiración de la Carta a los Hebreos nos instruyen, en éste Templo nosotros no atestiguamos las manifestaciones terrenas de la visión de Ezequiel, sino más bien la realidad que ellas anunciaban.<sup>11</sup> Aquí nosotros encontramos a “Jesús el mediador del nuevo pacto,”<sup>12</sup> aquí nosotros recibimos el perdón por nuestros pecados de parte de Cristo a través del Sacramento de la Penitencia y aún más, maravillosamente, nosotros recibimos Su Cuerpo, Sangre, Alma y Divinidad verdaderos en el Sacramento de la Divina Eucaristía, en la cual se contiene el entero bien de nuestra salvación.<sup>13</sup>

Today’s celebration points to the greatest gift of pilgrimage to this holy place. Here, the Mother of God draws us to the fullest possible earthly encounter with her Divine Son, our Savior. She brings us here to give us a glimpse of the perfection of our encounter with Our Lord when we will be with Him forever, together with the angels and all the saints, in the Kingdom of Heaven. Today’s celebration makes clear once again that the goal of our pilgrimage, the heart of this holy place, is the church in which Christ remains always ready to

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<sup>10</sup> Ez 43, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Heb 12, 18-19.

<sup>12</sup> Heb 12, 24.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Santo Tomás de Aquino, *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 65, a. 3, ad 1; q. 79, a. 1, c. et ad 1; Concilio Vaticano II, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 5.

meet us, to heal us, and to give us Himself, as He did for Zacchaeus.

On such a solemn occasion, recalling the immeasurable and unceasing love of God the Father for us in His Divine Son through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, let us pray especially for our world, that it may enjoy the peace which only comes through the practice of justice, especially justice on behalf of the smallest and the most defenseless. Let us also pray for the Church, that she may faithfully manifest the splendor of the word of Christ, especially in what pertains to the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony which is the irreplaceable foundation of our life in community, the first cell of the life of the Church. Let us pray, in particular, during this time of the preparation of a meeting of the Synod of Bishops, dedicated to the subject of marriage and the family, that the Church may manifest ever more faithfully and fully the splendor of the truth of Christ's word about Holy Matrimony, as God intended it for man and woman from the moment of Creation:

Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one?" So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.<sup>14</sup>

Let us pray for a new understanding and appreciation of the indissolubility of marriage, as a participation in the unceasing love of the Holy Trinity.

Let us also pray that soon the work of this Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe may be carried out more completely through the building of the Father John A. Hardon Marian Catechist Apostolate Center and Retreat House. The lack of a center of sound catechesis and of a place in which pilgrims can remain for several days in this holy place is daily more strongly felt. Consider, for instance, how much we need here a place in which the truth about Holy Matrimony can be taught and then experienced directly in the encounter with Christ in the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion. Think, too, of the many graces which will come to the married, when they are able to spend some days in this holy place, especially on the occasion of their marriage or the anniversary of their marriage, of the conception and birth of their children, or of a particular sorrow or joy in their marital union. Let us work to increase the necessary support of the great spiritual work accomplished here on behalf of

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<sup>14</sup> Mt 19, 4-6.

countless souls, so that the Marian Catechist Apostolate Center and Retreat House can be built and operated.

Before the Final Blessing, I will induct several children into the Saint Juan Diego Guild, invoking upon them the grace to follow daily the example of Saint Juan Diego, loving the Mother of God and, with her, loving her Divine Son with an undivided heart. After their induction, the new members of the Guild will be remembered daily in the celebration of the Holy Mass here and, in a particular way, on December 9<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of Saint Juan Diego. At the same time, through their fidelity to membership in the Guild, they will grow in acts of charity, especially at home and at school, and will pray daily, asking Saint Juan Diego to be their example and to intercede for them always. We congratulate them already now and assure them of our prayers.

Finally, I will confer knighthood in Our Lady's Knights of the Altar upon Matthew Sueppel who, over many months, under the attentive and thorough direction of Brother Joseph, has been preparing to present himself today to become Our Lady's Knight. Let us pray for him, so that he, under the care and direction of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of God, may always assist the priest in the celebration of the Holy Mass and the other sacred rites with thorough knowledge of the service he is giving and with the deepest devotion of love for Our Lord. Let us also pray for him, so that he may at all times conduct himself in a good and noble manner worthy of a Knight of Our Lady.

Celebrando el sexto aniversario de la dedicación del Templo de éste Santuario dedicado a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, apresurémonos a elevar nuestros corazones, siendo unidos con la Virgen de Guadalupe, ante el glorioso y traspasado Corazón de Jesús abierto hacia nosotros en Su Sacrificio Eucarístico. Nuestros corazones, colocados en el Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, serán purificados del pecado y llenados de la gracia del Espíritu Santo. A través de nuestro vivo encuentro con Nuestro Señor aquí en éste lugar, podremos convertirnos en los signos visibles de su indefectible presencia con nosotros en la Iglesia para la salvación del mundo.

*Heart of Jesus, sacred temple of God, 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