

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
LA CROSSE
DECEMBER 12, 2015

Zech 2, 14-17
Rv 11, 19a; 12, 1-6a.10ab
Lk 1, 26-38

HOMILY

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Las apariciones de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe nos atraen a contemplar el más gran evento en la historia del mundo: la Encarnación del Hijo de Dios en el seno de la Virgen María por obra del Espíritu Santo. En sus apariciones a San Juan Diego, las cuales iniciaron en el día de la fiesta de la Inmaculada Concepción, la Virgen Madre de Dios está con un niño, el Niño Jesús. El esplendor de su belleza, el rico simbolismo de su vestidura, y la notable transformación del entorno físico en el cual ella se apareció indican la verdad del gran misterio de la Encarnación Redentora: Dios el Padre, de su desmedido e incesante amor hacia el hombre, ha enviado a Dios Hijo en nuestra carne humana, así, por su Pasión, Muerte, Resurrección y Ascensión, el Espíritu Santo mora siempre en nuestras almas. Dios Hijo se ha hecho hombre en el seno de la Virgen María, para salvarnos de nuestros pecados y así ganar para nosotros la vida eterna. Todo acerca de las apariciones de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y su permanente presencia con nosotros a través de la milagrosa *tilma* de San Juan Diego señala la Encarnación Redentora. Nunca ha sucedido y nunca habrá un evento así en la historia del mundo.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, from her very first apparition, makes clear the reason of her coming to visit us, the reason of her remaining with us through the miraculous *tilma* of Saint Juan Diego:

I want very much to have a little house built here for me, in which I will show [the Lord of heaven and earth], I will exalt Him and make Him manifest. I will give Him to the people in all my personal love, in my compassion, in my help, in my protection: because I am truly your merciful

Mother,¹

It is not by chance that the Mother of God asks that a little chapel be built in which she will manifest God in all of His merciful love, for the chapel or church is the place of encounter with her Divine Son, especially in the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. A chapel or church also always reminds us of the Church herself, in which Christ faithfully abides through the outpouring of the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit into the souls of her living members.

The account of the Annunciation, of the Incarnation, in today's Gospel uncovers for us the richness of the mystery of Christ's life with us in the Church and our life in Him through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into our souls. The Mother of God is "full of grace,"² in virtue of her Immaculate Conception, so that she can be the fitting tabernacle for God the Son at His First Coming. The words of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary sound with wonder in our ears:

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall call him Jesus ...

The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore the child to be born
will be called holy, the Son of God.³

The significance of the name of the Divine Child was made clear by "the angel of the Lord" who appeared to Saint Joseph, after the Incarnation, instructing him about his duties as Foster-Father of God the Son Incarnate. The angel declared:

Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.⁴

Our Lady of Guadalupe came to manifest to us the mystery of the forgiveness of our sins through the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of God the Son Who

¹ "Mucho quiero, mucho deseo que aquí me levanten mi casita sagrada. En donde mostraré [el dueño del cielo, el dueño de la tierra], lo ensalzaré al ponerlo de manifiesto: La daré a las gentes en todo mi amor personal, en mi mirada compasiva, en mi auxilio, en mi salvación: Porque yo en verdad soy vuestra madre compasiva," *Nican Mopohua (Aquí se cuenta)*, tr. Mario Rojas Sánchez (México, D.F.: Design & Digital Print S.A. de C.V., 2001), pp. 3-4, nos. 26-29. English translation: "Nican Mopohua: Original Account of Guadalupe," *Handbook on Guadalupe* (New Bedford, MA: Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, 1997), p. 194.

² Lk 1, 28.

³ Lk 1, 31. 35.

⁴ Mt 1, 20-21.

took our human nature in her immaculate womb.

El Profeta Zacarías, quien anunció la venida de Dios a permanecer entre nosotros, conduciendo a toda la humanidad, “las muchas naciones,”⁵ por si mismo, nos instruye en la respuesta adecuada ante esa gran realidad. Él declara:

Silencio, toda la humanidad, en la presencia del Señor!

Por que El se ha despertado de su santa morada.⁶

Cuando contemplamos el misterio de la Encarnación Redentora, manifestada a nosotros por Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, nuestra respuesta más adecuada es la maravilla silenciosa. Si, nosotros debemos usar palabras para expresar el misterio, pero el misterio va siempre más allá de lo que podemos expresar. Al final, nosotros podemos sólo maravillarnos en silencio ante la inmensa generosidad e incesante fidelidad del amor de Dios hacia nosotros, una generosidad y fidelidad la cual será plena en la venida final de nuestro Señor, vista en el futuro en una visión de San Juan Evangelista. Cuando “[e]l templo de Dios en el cielo fué abierto”⁷ en la visión, apareció “una mujer vestida con el sol,”⁸ la Madre de Cristo, “la salvación y el poder y el reino de nuestro Dios”⁹ en nuestro medio.

Today’s patronal feast comes at the beginning of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, declared by Pope Francis on April 11th of this year and inaugurated on this past December 8th, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Today, in Rome, Pope Francis is fittingly placing the celebration of the Jubilee of Mercy into the maternal care of Our Lady of Guadalupe. In the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee, Pope Francis places our observance of the Holy Year under the maternal gaze of our Blessed Mother with these words:

My thoughts now turn to the Mother of Mercy. May the sweetness of her countenance watch over us in this Holy Year, so that all of us may rediscover the joy of God’s tenderness. No one has penetrated the profound mystery of the incarnation like Mary. Her entire life was patterned after the presence of mercy made flesh. The Mother of the Crucified and Risen One has entered the sanctuary of divine mercy because she participated

⁵ Zech 2, 11.

⁶ Zech 2, 12.

⁷ Rv 11, 19.

⁸ Rv 12, 1.

⁹ Rv 12, 10.

intimately in the mystery of his love.¹⁰

May Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Divine Mercy, inspire us and assist us by her prayers, so that the Jubilee of Mercy be the occasion of a deeper conversion to Christ in our personal lives and of the transformation of our culture, in accord with the moral law written upon every human heart and illumined by the word of Christ.¹¹

Mañana, abriré la Puerta de la Misericordia en éste templo, de acuerdo con las instrucciones del Santo Padre Francisco. Refiriéndonos a la apertura de la Puerta Santa de la Catedral de Roma, mañana, Tercer Domingo de Adviento, Su Santidad instruye que la Puerta de la Misericordia, “a través de la cual cualquiera que entre podrá experimentar el amor de Dios que consuela, que perdona y ofrece esperanza,”¹² será abierta en las Catedrales de todo el mundo. El da especial atención a la oportunidad de una Puerta de la Misericordia en templos, lugares de peregrinación, con éstas palabras:

A juicio del Ordinario, ella podrá ser abierta también en los Santuarios, meta de tantos peregrinos que en estos lugares santos con frecuencia son tocados en el corazón por la gracia y encuentran el camino de la conversión.¹³

Nuestro Obispo, Monseñor William Patrick Callaghan, reconociendo la santidad del Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe aquí como un lugar de peregrinación, ha pedido que una Puerta de la Misericordia sea abierta en éste Templo del Santuario. Mañana en la mañana, el Tercer Domingo de Adviento, de acuerdo con los deseos del Papa Francisco, yo abriré formalmente la Puerta de la Misericordia del Santuario. Oremos para que muchos peregrinos que entrarán a través de la Puerta, amen y sirvan a Cristo con todo su corazón.

¹⁰ “Il pensiero ora si volge alla Madre della Misericordia. La dolcezza del suo sguardo ci accompagna in questo Anno Santo, perché tutti possiamo riscoprire la gioia della tenerezza di Dio. Nessuno come Maria ha conosciuto la profondità del mistero di Dio fatto uomo. Tutto nella sua vita è stato plasmato dalla presenza della misericordia fatta carne. La Madre del Crocifisso Risorto è entrata nel santuario della misericordia divina perché ha partecipato intimamente al mistero del suo amore.” Papa Francesco, *Misericordiae Vultus. Bolla di Indizione del Giubileo Straordinario della Misericordia* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), p. 42, n. 24. English translation: Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus: Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), p. 43, no. 24.

¹¹ Cf. Rom 2, 13-16.

¹² “... dove chiunque entrerà potrà sperimentare l’amore di Dio che consola, che perdona e dona speranza.” VM, p. 5, n. 3. Versión española: Papa Francisco, *Misericordiae Vultus. Bula de Convocación del Jubileo Extraordinario de la Misericordia* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), p. 5, n. 3. [VMEs].

¹³ “A scelta dell’Ordinario, essa potrà essere aperta anche nei Santuari, mete di tanti pellegrini, che in questi luoghi sacri spesso sono toccati nel cuore dalla grazia e trovano la via della conversione.” VM, p. 6, n. 3. Versión española: VMEs, p. 6, n. 3.

In a particular way, may Our Lady of Guadalupe inspire and assist us in our work to build a catechetical center and retreat house for the more efficacious fulfillment of her mission of Divine Mercy. There is perhaps no greater need in the Church today than to teach once again the Catholic faith in its integrity. So many Catholics have not received a complete and sound instruction in the faith, as the Servant of God, Father John Anthony Hardon of the Society of Jesus understood so well. In his remarkable pastoral charity, Father Hardon founded the Marian Catechist Apostolate, in order to provide for the solid spiritual and doctrinal formation of catechists. He very much wanted that the headquarters of the Apostolate be at this shrine.

Closely connected with the need of sound catechesis is the desire of many pilgrims to spend some days here with Our Lady of Guadalupe, so that, at her feet, they may come to know Our Lord more profoundly, may come to love Him more ardently, and may come to serve Him more generously. Fittingly, the catechetical center and retreat house will be housed in the same building, serving the doctrinal and spiritual formation of all pilgrims, so that they can be more effective witnesses of Our Lord in the world. Let us hope that, during the coming months, significant funds can be raised for the building of the catechetical center and retreat house, so that Our Lady may extend ever more her mission of Divine Mercy in this her holy place.

During today's Holy Mass, Rossaukhon Florentina Smartthy, whom I baptized last evening, will make her First Holy Communion. Tomorrow, I will administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to her at the Oratory of the Immaculate Conception in Wausau, Wisconsin. Receiving today, for the first time, the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, under the forms of bread and wine, Rossaukhon Florentina will know Divine Mercy in the fullest manner possible for us during our earthly pilgrimage. From now on, our Eucharistic Lord, in His never failing mercy, will offer Himself to her as the Heavenly Bread of her earthly pilgrimage and the pledge of her eternal destiny in Heaven. Let us pray that she may faithfully contemplate the Mystery of Faith and thus approach the Altar of Christ's Sacrifice to receive His Body, the incomparable fruit of His Sacrifice.

Before the Final Blessing, three young men will be inducted as Pages in preparation for their full incorporation into Our Lady's Knights of the Altar. Under the careful direction, first, of Brother Joseph, and now, of Brother Michael, Joseph Hegland, Johnathon Sueppel and Michael Sueppel have been prepared to take today an important step on the way to becoming Our Lady's Knights of the Altar. Let us pray for them, so that they persevere in the way of Our Lady's

Pages, perfecting their service at the altar of Our Lord's Sacrifice and growing in holiness, so that their thinking, speaking and acting will always be coherent with their filial identity as Our Lady's Pages.

Elevemos nuestros corazones hacia el Corazón Eucarístico de Jesús, el Trono de la Misericordia Divina. Sólo en el Corazón de Jesús podemos encontrar el perdón de nuestros pecados y ser infundidos de su amor en nuestras almas. Ojalá que pongamos nuestros corazones, juntos con el Inmaculado Corazón de María, en el glorioso y traspasado Corazón de Jesús, ello sea el corazón de nuestra observancia del Jubileo Extraordinario de la Divina Misericordia. Que ello pueda ser la fuente de grande y generoso sacrificio para el crecimiento del gran trabajo espiritual del santuario y en especial para la construcción del Centro de Apostolado Catequético Mariano y Casa de Retiro dedicados al Padre John A. Hardon, S.I.

Heart of Jesus, patient and most merciful, have mercy on us.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Virgin most merciful, pray for us.

Saint Joseph, Protector of holy Church, pray for us.

Saint Juan Diego, pray for us. Amen.

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE