

Missa de Sancta Maria in Sabbato, Tempore Adventus
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe
La Crosse, Wisconsin
10 December 2016

Is 7, 10-15
Lk 1, 26-28

SERMON

Praised be Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.

Honoring the Virgin Mother of God on Saturday has a particularly rich significance during the Season of Advent. As we prepare to celebrate the coming of God the Son into the world in time – recognizing His abiding presence in our midst in virtue of His Passion, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Sending of the Holy Spirit, and anticipating His Final Coming in glory at the end of time – it is the Blessed Virgin Mary who keeps our eyes fixed upon Him Who alone reveals to us eternal truth and enables us to live the truth in pure and selfless love. She is the virgin mother about whom Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes. She is the privileged instrument by which God has fulfilled His promise of salvation, made immediately after the sin of our First Parents: “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son: and his name shall be called Emmanuel.”¹ From all time and, therefore, from the first moment of her being, Mary, daughter of Joachim and Ann, was destined to be the Mother of God, to be the first tabernacle in which God would unite His divine nature to our human nature, in order to bring us the forgiveness of our sins and life everlasting.

The Virgin Mary is, indeed, as the Archangel Gabriel declared at the Annunciation, “full of grace.”² By the extraordinary favor of God and in view of the salvation of man, she was preserved from any stain whatever of sin, so that she would be the all-pure vessel in which God the Son could take our human nature. God privileged her to enjoy, in advance, the grace of eternal salvation which her Divine Son would win for man by His Passion, Death and Resurrection. We have just celebrated the great mystery of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th, and we will celebrate it again on December 12th, the Solemnity of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who appeared on our continent for four days in 1531, beginning on the feast of her Immaculate Conception. At her first appearance to Saint Juan Diego, her faithful messenger, she

¹ Is 7, 14.

² Lk 1, 28.

identified herself with these words:

Know, for sure my dearest and youngest son, that I am truly the ever perfect Holy Virgin Mary, who has the honor to be the Mother of the one true God for whom we all live, the Creator of people, the Lord of all around us and of what is close to us, the Lord of Heaven, the Lord of Earth.³

By the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Heart was united to a human heart under the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The Blessed Virgin Mary manifests the extraordinary nature of our being, as God has created us, for she, from the first moment of her life, was preserved from every stain of sin, from anything which could lessen or destroy her communion with God. She manifests our destiny to be restored to communion with God through the mystery of the Redemptive Incarnation. She shows us the way of her Divine Son Who alone is our salvation, and she intercedes always with Him for us, so that our hearts may rest always more securely within His glorious pierced Heart.

As Saint Paul teaches us in the Letter to the Colossians, we are called to share in Christ's redemptive work in every time and place, and, in that sense, to "complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church."⁴ We see the image of that call in the mystical piercing of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, at the foot of the Cross, when she saw the Roman soldier pierce the Heart of her Son with a spear. In the Eucharistic Sacrifice, we, with Saint John the Apostle, stand with Mary Immaculate and imitate the union of her Immaculate Heart with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Even as Christ pours out ever anew His life for us in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, as He first did on the cross at Calvary, so also we, with Mary, unite ourselves to Christ in His Sacrifice, offering our sufferings for the salvation of the world. In this way, we best prepare for the Christmas Solemnity, we best know the abiding presence of Christ with us in the Church, and we best anticipate His coming in glory on the Last Day.

The offering of the Pontifical Mass, according to the *Usus Antiquior*, the More Ancient Usage of the Church, makes evident to us how divine grace, flowing immeasurably and

³ "Sabélo, ten por cierto, hijo mío, el más pequeño, que yo soy en verdad la perfecta siempre Virgen Santa María, que tengo el honor de ser Madre del verdaderísimo Dios por quien se vive, el Creador de las personas, el Dueño de la cercanía y de la inmediateción, el *Dueño del cielo, el Dueño de la tierra.*" Carl A. Anderson y Mons. Eduardo Chávez, "Apéndice A: *El Nican Mopohua,*" *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: Madre de la civilización del amor* (México, D.F.: Grijalbo [Random House Mondadori], 2010), p. 214. English translation: Carl A. Anderson and Msgr. Eduardo Chávez, "Appendix A: *The Nican Mopohua,*" *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), p. 173, no. 26.

⁴ Col 1, 24.

unceasingly from the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, comes to us in the highest and most perfect manner in the Holy Eucharist. The More Ancient Usage, which was the ordinary form of the Roman Rite of the Holy Mass from the time of Saint Gregory the Great until the reforms of the Sacred Liturgy after the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, powerfully manifests the Apostolic Tradition, the unbroken line of Christ's abiding presence with us in the Church by means of the Apostolic ministry, by means of the pastoral charity of the Apostles and their successors, from the Last Supper to the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass this morning. The incomparably sublime beauty, reflected in the careful articulation of the More Ancient Usage, unveils the truth that here, on the altar of this church, heaven descends to earth: Christ, seated in glory at the right hand of the Father descends to the altar to make sacramentally present His Sacrifice on Calvary and its incomparable fruit, the Heavenly Bread of His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Today marks the first celebration of the Pontifical Holy Mass, according to the Ancient Usage, in this church holy to the memory of Our Lady of Guadalupe, of her apparitions and her message given to us from December 9th to the 12th of 1531. Today's solemn celebration marks a historic moment in the regular celebration of the Holy Mass according to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite in this church. In a particular way, the celebration of the two forms of the one Roman Rite makes possible that fuller and richer encounter with Christ, to which Our Lady of Guadalupe is constantly leading us. It is my hope to be able to celebrate more regularly the Pontifical Mass according to the Extraordinary Form or More Ancient Usage, in fidelity to the mission of this holy place. I thank all who have made possible today's celebration, especially Una Voce of La Crosse and its President, David Palm, and the Secular Canons of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest.

Mary Immaculate now leads us to the Eucharistic Sacrifice in which we, with her, are united with Christ, her Son, in the offering of His life for the salvation of all men. She also leads us to the Fruit of His Sacrifice: Communion in His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity which purifies and strengthens us to embrace our suffering with pure and selfless love of God and of our neighbor. With her, we prepare for the great Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. With her, we recognize the glorious Christ alive for us in Church, and we draw near to Him. With her, we prepare for His Final Coming, filled with humility and trust. Christ alone is

our salvation. He alone wins the victory of eternal life. One with Him, especially in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, His victory is also ours.

*Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, 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.*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE