

Common of the Anniversary of the Dedication of a Church
Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe
La Crosse, Wisconsin
31 July 2023

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

Homily

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

The late Dr. Warren H. Carroll, gifted historian and founder of Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia, after entering into the full communion of the Catholic Church, grew steadily in his devotion to the Virgin Mother of God. In 1983, he published the fruits of his study of the apparitions and message of Our Lady of Guadalupe. His book, *Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Conquest of the Darkness*,¹ honors the Virgin Mother of God who led the Mexican people out of the deadly darkness of massive human sacrifice and of violent conflict between the native people and the Spanish explorers and settlers. His small book of just 120 pages provides the historical evidence of the mission which Our Lady of Guadalupe, with the assistance of her messenger Saint Juan Diego, accomplished in 1531 and has continued to accomplish, through her miraculous image on the tilma of Saint Juan Diego, for almost 500 years. It is the mission which she continues to accomplish in this church solemnly dedicated 15 years ago today.

It is the mission of showing her Divine Son Who alone is man's salvation to all her children. In her first apparition to Saint Juan Diego, on December 9, 1531, she immediately asked that a chapel be built in which pilgrims would encounter her, and she would carry out the mission given to her by God on their behalf. She declared: "I want very much that they build my sacred little house here, in which I will show Him, I will exalt Him upon making Him manifest, I will give

¹ Cf. Warren H. Carroll, *Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Conquest of Darkness* (Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1983).

Him to all people in all my personal love, Him that is my compassionate gaze, Him that is my help, Him that is my salvation.”²

Nuestra Señora atrae a los peregrinos aquí, a la iglesia del santuario, para que reciban la gracia de un encuentro salvador con su Hijo divino, Nuestro Señor, como prefigurado en el encuentro en Jericó del muy pecador Zaqueo con Nuestro Señor. Es la gracia que Dios Hijo encarnado, sentado a la derecha del Padre y presente sacramentalmente en la Iglesia, derrama en nuestros corazones desde su glorioso corazón traspasado. Es la gracia del perdón de los pecados y de la conversión de nuestra vida – una vez más – a Cristo que es nuestra única salvación. Encontrando a Nuestro Señor en la oración y en la devoción, y, lo que es más perfecto aún, en los sacramentos, Él disipa las tinieblas de nuestras vidas y nos invita a permanecer siempre en su compañía. Así conocemos el cumplimiento de la profecía de Ezequiel: «Hijo de hombre, este es el lugar de mi trono, el lugar donde se asienta la planta de mis pies. Aquí habitaré para siempre en medio de los israelitas³». El encuentro con Nuestro Señor aquí es también un anticipo de nuestro destino eterno, «... la Ciudad del Dios viviente, a la Jerusalén celestial, a una multitud de ángeles, a una fiesta solemne, a la asamblea de los primogénitos cuyos nombres están escritos en el cielo. Se han acercado a Dios, que es el Juez del universo, y a los espíritus de los justos que ya han llegado a la perfección, a Jesús, el mediador de la Nueva Alianza...⁴», como anuncia la *Carta a los Hebreos*.

Privileged to participate in the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass on the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Solemn Dedication of the Shrine Church, let us pray that the Shrine of Our Lady here, in fidelity to her mission, may radiate ever more brilliantly the light of Christ in a world beset with deadly darkness. We live at a time of shocking disorder in society, a disorder which compromises the very foundation of human life in the family. The godlessness which wantonly assaults the

² “Mucho quiero, mucho deseo, que aquí me levanten mi casita sagrada, en donde lo mostraré, lo ensalzaré al ponerlo de manifiesto, lo entregaré a las gentes en todo mi amor personal, a Él que es mi mirada compasiva, a Él que es mi auxilio, a Él que es mi salvación.” Carl A. Anderson y Mons. Eduardo Chávez, *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Madre de la civilización del amor* (México, DF: Random House Mondadori, S.A. de C.V., 2010), p. 214, nn. 26-28. English translation: Carl A. Anderson and Msgr. Eduardo Chávez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), p. 173, nos. 26-28.

³ Ez. 43, 7.

⁴ Hb. 12, 22-24.

divine law to do good and to avoid evil, with its corollary precepts of respect for the inviolable dignity of human life, for the integrity of marriage and family life, and for the freedom of religion sees the Catholic faith as its enemy and attempts, through false prophets and false shepherds, to undermine from within the divine authority of the Catholic Church.

La oscuridad causada por el desorden generalizado es una fuente de grave tentación de desaliento para quienes se esfuerzan por practicar la fe tal como nos ha sido transmitida en línea ininterrumpida desde los apóstoles. ¿Cómo puede el católico devoto vencer la tentación del desánimo, que tristemente, para algunos, conduce al abandono de la Iglesia en la que Nuestro Señor habita con nosotros siempre, hasta el último día, de acuerdo con su promesa a los apóstoles en la Ascensión⁵?

La medicina y el alimento que nos fortalece para vencer la tentación del desaliento y ser fuertes en el «buen combate⁶» diario de la vida en la Iglesia es el santo Sacrificio de la Misa que estamos ofreciendo. Es la acción de Cristo en medio de nosotros, haciendo sacramentalmente presente su sacrificio en el Calvario para el perdón de los pecados, y la victoria sobre Satanás y todas sus tentaciones y engaños. La santa Misa nos lleva a ver nuestra vida y especialmente el sufrimiento en nuestras vidas como una llamada de Nuestro Señor a vivir más íntimamente en comunión con Él, a poner nuestra confianza más plenamente en Él.

In our struggle to understand the permissive will of God, to understand the reason why God permits society and the Church itself to undergo such violent tribulations, the Mother of God, at the foot of the Cross, teaches us to turn again and again to the Lord, placing our trust in Him and in His promises, and rededicating ourselves, in the words of Saint Paul, to “[fight] the good fight,” to “[finish] the race,” and to “[keep] the faith.”⁷ The Virgin of Guadalupe draws us to do what we are about to do now: uniting our hearts, together with her Immaculate Heart, to the glorious-pierced Heart of Jesus Christ the King of Heaven and Earth in His Eucharistic Sacrifice. In accord with the promise of the Lord, the fruits of His Sacrifice, the fruits of our union with Him in His Sacrifice, are beyond all our imagination. Our Lord not only sacramentally renews His Sacrifice on Calvary,

⁵ Cf. Mt. 28, 20.

⁶ 2 Tim. 4, 7.

⁷ 2 Tm 4, 7.

but He remains sacramentally present in the fruit of His Sacrifice, the Sacred Host reposed in the tabernacle and exposed for adoration in the monstrance. He provides that His priests continue to act in His person in the offering of the Holy Mass “from the rising of the sun to its setting”⁸ and in the forgiveness of our sins in the Sacrament of Penance.

On this most joyful occasion, let us thank God for the mission of the Shrine, the mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe, to be a beacon of light which draws all men to Christ Who is Divine Mercy Incarnate, to Christ alive for us always in the Church and most wonderfully in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Let us pray, in a special way, that the Shrine may continue to bring encouragement and strength to the many who today are suffering so severely from the darkness of our times, from the disorder of life in society and in the Church.

After Holy Communion, we will have the great joy of witnessing the induction of Our Lady’s Knights of the Altar, young men who devote themselves to the service of Our Lord as He makes sacramentally present His Sacrifice on Calvary and as He nourishes and heals us with the fruit of His Sacrifice: the Sacred Host which is His true Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Our Lady’s Knights of the Altar are formed as soldiers of Christ at His service under the care and direction of Our Lady of Guadalupe. In their service, they strive to be one in heart with her Immaculate Heart, resting always in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Let us pray for Henry Ilfrey, Nicholas Kusmitch, Michael Stott, and Jacob Sueppel, that they may never tire of serving Christ at the Altar of His Sacrifice, and that, the holiness of their service at the altar may radiate in everything they think and say and do.

Llenos de profundo agradecimiento y asombro, elevemos ahora nuestros corazones, unidos con el Corazón inmaculado de la Virgen de Guadalupe y con el Corazón glorioso perforado de Jesús abierto para recibirnos en el Sacrificio eucarístico. Que el amor de su Corazón divino nos sane y fortalezca en nuestro peregrinaje terreno hacia nuestra patria celestial, la nueva y eterna Jerusalén.

En el nombre del Padre, y del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo. Amén.

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

⁸ Mal 1, 11.