

Solemnity of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe
La Crosse, Wisconsin
December 12, 2023

Zech 2, 14-17
Jdt 13, 18bcde. 19
Rv 11, 19a; 12, 1-6a.10ab
Lk 1, 26-38

Homily

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

The cause of our joy today is the truth which the Virgin Mother of God, Our Lady of Guadalupe, announced to Saint Juan Diego at the very beginning of her apparitions to him from December 9th to 12th of 1531:

Know, 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 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.¹

From the symbols imprinted upon her most beautiful garment, Saint Juan Diego knew that she was with child and from her words he understood that the Child was God the Son Incarnate in her womb.

Carl Anderson, the then-Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, and Monsignor Eduardo Chávez, renowned scholar of the Virgin of Guadalupe, in their book, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love*, help us to understand the power of the symbols and of Our Lady's words. Commenting on how Our Lady used titles for the Supreme Being from the ancient pagan culture – for whom God was inaccessible and therefore unknown – to refer to her Divine Son, they explain for us how the wonderful mystery of her Divine Maternity is symbolized in her most beautiful garment:

¹ “Sábelo, 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.*” “Apéndice A, *El Nican Mopohua*,” in Carl Anderson y Monseñor Eduardo Chávez, *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Madre de la civilización del amor* (México: Grijalbo, 2010), p. 214, n. 26. [NMEsp]. English translation: “Appendix A, *The Nican Mopohua*,” in Carl A. Anderson and Msgr. Eduardo Chávez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), p. 173, no. 26. [NMEng].

In the apparition account, Our Lady of Guadalupe speaks of her Son using these titles (Him for whom one lives, Creator of people, Owner of the near and close, Lord of heaven and earth). And yet, it is absolutely clear that she is speaking of Christ. In the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, this takes shape as a magnificent inculturated evangelization through the positioning of the jasmine flower on the womb of the image, just below her pregnancy belt, thus identifying her Child as divine. In this, the symbol of the four-petal jasmine shows the Indians that the omnipotent God is reachable by any human being; and not only is he interested in them but he delivers himself to them: it is wondrous that this omnipotent God, the deeply rooted God, now comes to find and deliver himself to mankind through his mother.²

The cause of our joy today, the cause of our abiding joy, the cause of our eternal joy, is Christ, God-the-Son Incarnate, Whom His Virgin Mother brought into the world and to Whom she is ever drawing us, showing us that He, seated at the right hand of God-the-Father in glory, is also with us in His holy Church which, together with the Virgin Mary, we rightly call Mother.

Christ is the fulfillment of man's deepest desire: to know God and to love and serve Him. Our Lady uses the ancient pagan language to show that Christ alone fulfills man's deepest longing. She does not reduce her Divine Maternity to the understanding of the pagans but manifests the truth that the Redemptive Incarnation corrects, elevates, and perfects that understanding. Christ's Coming into the World is, as His Public Ministry shows, always the invitation to conversion of life. The first words of Our Lord's preaching are: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."³ In fact, we know that, subsequent to her apparitions, in a relatively short space of time, millions of pagans received the grace of Faith and Baptism.⁴

² "En el relato de la aparición, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe habla de su Hijo usando estos mismos títulos (Aquel por quien se vive, Creador de la gente, Dueño de lo cercano y lo lejano, Señor del Cielo y la tierra) y, sin embargo, resulta perfectamente claro que habla del verdaderísimo Dios, su Hijo Jesucristo. En el mensaje y en la imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, esto cobra la forma de una magnífica evangelización inculturada a través de la posición del jazmín sobre su vientre, justo debajo de su cinta de embarazo, con lo cual se identifica al Niño Dios, la Encarnación del Verbo. Aquí, el símbolo del jazmín de cuatro pétalos muestra a los indígenas que es el verdaderísimo Dios omnipotente quien viene a su encuentro, ye que no solo se interesa por ellos sino que se les entrega: es maravilloso que este Dios omnipotente, el Dios de profundas raíces, venga ahora a entregarse a la humanidad por medio de su madre." Carl Anderson y Monseñor Eduardo Chávez, *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Madre de la civilización del amor* (México: Grijalbo, 2010), pp. 75-76. English translation: Carl A. Anderson and Msgr. Eduardo Chávez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Mother of the Civilization of Love* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), pp. 47-48.

³ Mk 1, 15. Cf. Mk 4, 17.

⁴ cf. *A Handbook on Guadalupe* (New Bedford, MA: Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, 1997, 2001), p. 218.

La Virgen de Guadalupe, la Virgen Madre de Dios, en la visión de San Juan Apóstol y Evangelista, es la "mujer vestida de sol, con la luna debajo de sus pies, y sobre su cabeza una corona de doce estrellas"⁵. Ella ha dado a luz al "hijo varón, que ha de gobernar con su cetro a todas las naciones",⁶ el que vence a Satanás, "el padre de la mentira",⁷ aquel que tiene un programa de violencia y muerte para el hombre. Él está siempre merodeando para ver qué almas puede devorar,⁸ pero Dios-Hijo, nacido de la Virgen María lo ha derrotado para siempre. El Arcángel Gabriel declaró a la Virgen María la gran verdad sobre su Divino Hijo en el momento de Su concepción:

He aquí que concebirás en tu seno y darás a luz un hijo, y le pondrás por nombre Jesús. Será grande y se llamará Hijo del Altísimo, y el Señor Dios le dará el trono de David, su padre, y reinará sobre la casa de Jacob para siempre, y su Reino no tendrá fin.⁹

En la Anunciación, en la Concepción Virginal de Dios Hijo, se cumplió la promesa de Dios pronunciada por medio del profeta Zacarías: "... porque he aquí que vengo y habitaré en medio de vosotros, ...".¹⁰ Nosotros, por el Bautismo, somos miembros vivos del Cuerpo Místico de Cristo. Dios Espíritu Santo habita en nuestras almas, llamándonos cada día a convertir nuestras vidas a Cristo. La Madre de Cristo, que Él nos dio como Madre nuestra cuando moría en la cruz,¹¹ en su amor materno, nos lleva siempre hacia Él con las palabras que dirigió a los mayordomos del vino en las Bodas de Caná: "Haced lo que Él os diga."¹²

En la época de las apariciones de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, la Iglesia misionera en lo que hoy es México sufría desafíos aparentemente imposibles: el violento conflicto entre los nativos americanos y los exploradores y colonos españoles, y la diabólica práctica de sacrificios humanos masivos por parte de los paganos. El Señor envió a la Virgen para mostrar el camino hacia el orden y la paz en la vida personal y en la sociedad: Cristo. A través de sus apariciones y de su presencia permanente en la tilma milagrosa de San Juan Diego, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe mostró al Obispo y a toda la Iglesia que el camino para vencer el mal y difundir el bien es enseñar la verdad,

⁵ Ap. 12, 1.

⁶ Ap 12, 5.

⁷ Jn 8, 44.

⁸ cf. 1 Pe 5, 8.

⁹ Lc 1, 31-33.

¹⁰ Zac 2, 10.

¹¹ cf. Jn 19, 27.

¹² Jn 2, 5.

orar en todo momento y ofrecer todo nuestro amor a Dios en el Culto Sagrado, y practicar la verdad en el amor.

La Iglesia de nuestro tiempo se enfrenta a retos similares, aparentemente imposibles. La propia vida humana, el matrimonio y la familia, y la práctica de la fe se encuentran bajo el ataque constante de una cultura que se niega a reconocer a Dios y a someterse en obediencia a sus mandamientos. Muchos se sublevan hoy violentamente contra Dios, que se nos revela a través de la razón y, del modo más pleno y perfecto, a través de la fe católica. La rebelión ha seducido incluso a miembros del Cuerpo Místico de Cristo, llevándoles a abandonar a Cristo y Su Camino, conduciéndoles a la apostasía. ¿Qué debemos hacer nosotros? ¿Qué debe hacer la Iglesia?

Algunos, incluso entre los Obispos, nos dirían que la Iglesia tiene que cambiar su doctrina, su Culto Sagrado y su disciplina, para acomodarse a la cultura. Hablan de un necesario cambio de paradigma o de una mal definida vía sinodal que declara que todos son bienvenidos en la Iglesia sin dejar clara la conversión a Cristo que es necesaria para ser miembro de su Cuerpo Místico. Olvidan que el rey de la Parábola del banquete de bodas, que había acogido a todos, "a los buenos y a los malos",¹³ al banquete de bodas de su hijo, cuando vio a "un hombre que no tenía traje de bodas",¹⁴ lo hizo expulsar del banquete. Nuestro Señor concluye la Parábola del banquete de bodas con la admonición: "Muchos son los llamados, pero pocos los elegidos".¹⁵ Sí, Nuestro Señor quiere que todos nosotros participemos en el banquete de la gracia divina, pero no podremos hacerlo a menos que nuestros corazones, unidos con el Corazón Inmaculado de María, descansen en Su Sacratísimo Corazón, a menos que nos dejemos revestir de Él en nuestra vida diaria.¹⁶

The way of the Church in today's crisis is the same as it has always been. The teaching of the Deposit of Faith and of all the riches of the Catholic Faith, daily prayer and worship of God "in spirit and in truth,"¹⁷ and a good and holy daily life. Before the great challenge of our time, Pope Saint John Paul II cautioned us that we will not save ourselves and our world by discovering "some magic formula" or by "inventing a new programme."¹⁸ In unmistakable terms, he declared:

¹³ Mt 22, 10.

¹⁴ Mt 22, 11.

¹⁵ Mt 22, 14.

¹⁶ cf. Rom 13, 14; Gal 3, 27.

¹⁷ Jn 4, 23-24.

¹⁸ "... formulam veluti «magicam» ... excogitando «novo consilio»." Ioannes Paulus PP. II, Epistula Apostolica *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, "Magni Iubilaei anni MM sub exitum," 6 Ianuarii 2001, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 93 (2001), p. 285, no. 29. [Hereafter, *NMI*]. English translation: Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, "At the Close of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000," 6 January 2001, Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2001, p. 39, no. 29. [Hereafter, *NMIE*].

No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: *I am with you*.¹⁹

He reminded us that the program by which we are to address effectively the great spiritual challenges of our time is, in the end, Jesus Christ alive for us in the Church. He explained:

The programme already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its center in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication.²⁰

In short, the program leading to freedom and happiness is, for each of us, holiness of life, in accord with our state in life and the particular gifts with which God has endowed us.

Pope Saint John Paul II, in fact, saw the entire pastoral plan for the Church in the holiness of life in Christ. He explained himself thus:

In fact, to place pastoral planning under the heading of holiness is a choice filled with consequences. It implies the conviction that, since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethics and a shallow religiosity. To ask catechumens: “Do you wish to receive Baptism?” means at the same time to ask them: “Do you wish to become holy?” It means to set before them the radical nature of the Sermon on the Mount: “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (*Mt 5:48*).²¹

¹⁹ “Nullo modo: servabit nos nulla formula, verum Persona una atque certitudo illa quam nobis Ipsa infundit: *Ego vobiscum sum!*” *NMI*, p. 285, no. 29. English translation: *NMIE*, p. 39, no. 29.

²⁰ “*Tam enim praesto est consilium seu «programma»: illud nempe quod de Evangelio derivatur semper vivaque Traditione. Tandem in Christo ipso deprehenditur istud, qui sane cognoscendus est, diligendus atque imitandus, ut vita in eo trinitaria ducatur et cum eo historia ipsa transfiguretur ad suam usque in Hierosolymis caelestibus consummationem. Institutum enim hoc, variantibus quidem temporibus ipsis atque culturae formis non mutatur quamvis rationem quidem habeat temporis et culturae, ut verum instituat diverbium efficacemque communicationem.*” *NMI*, pp. 285-286, no. 29. English translation: *NMIE*, pp. 39-40, no. 29.

²¹ “*Re quidem vera, si pastoralis ordinatio sub signo sanctitatis statuitur, aliquid compluribus cum consecrariis decernitur. Inde enim in primis firma aperitur sententia: si vera est Baptismus ingressio in Dei sanctitatem per insertionem in Christum ipsum necnon Spiritus eius per inhabitationem, quaedam repugnantia est contentum esse*

It is to holiness of life in Christ that Our Lady of Guadalupe draws us. Leaving the ordinariness of our daily living to come on pilgrimage to her holy place, she manifests to us the extraordinariness of our daily living in Christ.

At Holy Communion today, Georgiana Maria Faustina Triplett will make her First Holy Communion. Consecrated to Our Lady of Guadalupe shortly after her birth, the Shrine here has been a true spiritual home for her. Our Lady has been guiding her to live in Christ, and today her life in Christ will reach its fullness when she receives Our Lord – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – in Holy Communion.

Before the Final Blessing, we will have the Induction of Pages in Our Lady’s Knights of the Altar, the boys and young men who serve Our Lord during the Sacred Liturgy here. Let us pray, invoking the intercession of Our Lady and of Saint Juan Diego, that John Kabat, Louis Martin, Leonardo Martin, and Emmanuel Martin who today will become Pages, will persevere in the way to Knighthood in Our Lady’s Knights of the Altar. May the holiness of their service of Our Lord at the altar, under the guidance and protection of Our Lady, be reflected in every aspect of their daily lives.

Entreguemos ahora, bajo el cuidado maternal de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, nuestros corazones completamente a Nuestro Señor en Su Sacrificio Eucarístico. Que la santidad de nuestra unión de corazón con Su Sacratísimo Corazón a través del Santísimo Sacramento del Altar brille en cada uno de nuestros pensamientos, palabras y acciones.

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

Raymond Leo Cardinal BURKE

mediocri vita, quae ad normam transigitur ethnicae doctrinae minimum solum poscentis ac religionis superficiem tantum tangentis. Ex catechumeno quaerere: «Vis baptizari?» eodem tempore est petere: «Vis sanctificari?». Idem valet ac deponere eius in via extremum Sermonis Montani principium: «Estote ergo vos perfecti, sicut Pater vester caelestis perfectus est» (Mt 5, 48).” *NMI*, p. 288, no. 31. English translation: *NMIE*, 43, no. 31.