



The Holy See

EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION ON THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Vatican Basilica
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[Multimedia]

“Let all the peoples praise thee, O Lord / Be gracious to us and bless us / and make thy face to shine upon us, / that thy way may be known upon earth, / thy saving power among all nations. / Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, / for thou dost judge the people with equity / and guide the nations upon earth” (cf. Ps 67[66]).

The prayer of the Psalmist, of supplication, of forgiveness and of blessing of the peoples and of nations and, at the same time, of joyous praise, helps to express the spiritual meaning of this celebration. The peoples and nations of our great Latin American homeland, with gratitude and joy, commemorate the Feast of their Patroness, Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose devotion spans from Alaska to Patagonia. Thus from the Archangel Gabriel and St Elizabeth to us, we raise our filial prayer: “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you...” (cf. Lk 1:28).

On this Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, let us first of all gratefully remember her visit and maternal closeness; let us sing her *Magnificat* with Her; and let us entrust the life of our peoples and the continental mission of the Church to her. When she appeared to St Juan Diego on the Hill of Tepeyac, she presented herself as the “ever perfect Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of the true God” (*Nican Mopohua*); and so made a new “visitation”. She also hastened attentively to embrace the new American peoples, at their dramatic birth. It was as though a “great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet” (Rev 12:1), taking upon herself the cultural and religious symbolism of the indigenous peoples, she proclaimed and gave her Son to all these new peoples lacerated by their mixed origin.

So many jumped for joy and hope at her visit and at the gift of her Son, and the perfect disciple of the Lord became the “great missionary who brought the Gospel to our Americas” (cf. *Aparecida Document*, n. 269). The Son of Mary Most Holy, Immaculate Conception, has thus revealed Himself from the beginning of the history of the new peoples as “the most true God, giver of life”, the Good News of the filial dignity of all the inhabitants of the Americas. Now, no one is only a servant, but we all are children of one and the same Father, brothers among us and servants in the Servant.

The Holy Mother of God visited these peoples and has wished to remain with them. She mysteriously left her sacred image imprinted on the *tilma* [cloak] of her messenger so we would feel her constant presence, thereby becoming a symbol of Mary’s covenant with these peoples, to whom she imparts her soul and tenderness. Through her intercession, the Christian faith began to grow into the most precious treasure of the soul of the American peoples, whose pearl of great value is Jesus Christ: a patrimony that has been passed on and is manifest still today in the baptism of multitudes of people, in the faith, in hope and charity of many, in the preciousness of popular piety and also in the American ethos which is shown in the awareness of human dignity, in the passion for justice, in solidarity with the poorest and the suffering, in the hope, at times, against all hope.

Today, from here we can continue to praise God for the wonders He has worked in the life of the Latin American peoples. God, in his way, “has hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to the lowly and humble, to the lowly in heart” (cf. Mt 11:25). In the wonders that the Lord has fulfilled in Mary, She recognizes her Son’s manner and mode of conduct in salvation history. Overturning worldly judgments, destroying at all costs the idols of power, wealth and success, denouncing self-sufficiency, arrogance and secular messianism which distance people from God, the Marian Canticle professes that God takes pleasure in overturning ideologies and worldly hierarchies. He lifts up the humble, comes to the aid of the poor and the lowly, fills with goodness, with blessings and hope those who trust in his mercy from generation to generation, while He puts down from their thrones the wealthy, the powerful and the overbearing.

The *Magnificat* thus introduces us to the Beatitudes, the primordial synthesis and law of the Gospel message. In light of the *Magnificat*, let us feel compelled today to ask for a grace, a wholly Christian grace, that the future of Latin America be forged by the poor and by those who suffer, by the meek, by those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, by the merciful, by the pure in heart, by the peacemakers, by those who are persecuted for the sake of Christ’s name, “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (cf. Mt 5:1-11).

May the grace be forged by those who today, are relegated to the category of slaves, of objects to be exploit or simply be rejected, by the idolatrous system of the throwaway culture.

And we make this request because Latin America is the “continent of hope”! For we expect from it

new models of development, which link Christian tradition to civil progress, justice and equity to reconciliation, scientific and technological development to human wisdom, fruitful suffering to hopeful joy. This hope can be protected only by great amounts of truth and love, the foundations of all reality, revolutionary engines of an authentic new life.

We place these realities and these hopes on the altar as a gift pleasing to God. Imploring his forgiveness and trusting in his mercy, we celebrate the sacrifice and Paschal victory of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one Lord, the “liberator” from all our slavery and misery derived from sin. He is the historical cornerstone and was the great rejected One. He calls us to live the true life, a more human life, to live together as children and brothers, with the doors already open to “a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev 21:1). Let us implore the Most Holy Virgin Mary, as Our Lady of Guadalupe — Mother of God, the Queen and My Lady, “my maiden, my little one”, as St Juan Diego called her, and with all the loving names by which we turn to Her in popular piety — let us pray that she continue to accompany, help and protect our peoples. And may she lead by the hand all the children who go on pilgrimage to those lands to meet her Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, present in the Church, in his sacramental nature, especially in the Eucharist, present in the treasure of his Word and in his teaching, present in the holy and faithful People of God, present in those who are suffering and in the lowly in heart. And should we be frightened by such a bold plan or should worldly pusillanimity threaten us, may She return to speak to our heart and enable us to hear her voice, that of Mother, of “Good Mother”, of “Great Mother”: Why are you afraid? Am I not here, I, who am your Mother?”.