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Prelate's Homily at Thanksgiving Mass in Rome for Guadalupe's Beatification

Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz,
Prelate of Opus Dei, preached
this homily in the Basilica of
Saint Eugene at the Mass of
Thanksgiving for the
Beatification of Guadalupe
Ortiz de Landázuri.

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“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and do not forget all his gifts” (*Ps 102:2*).

This psalm that we sang a few minutes ago also expresses our joy at the beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri. And while we thank God and also Pope Francis for having set forth Guadalupe as a model of holiness, let us not forget – as the psalmist reminds us – all the gifts and mercies that the Lord has bestowed on us.

When considering the life of Guadalupe, among the variety of aspects that stand out, the one that especially calls our attention is her joy. Guadalupe's joy was deep: it was not something superficial. It brought her peace at trying moments, and enabled her to show affection to so many different people. It was a joy compatible with both hard work and rest. What can we do to make joy a

permanent part of our own lives? Supernatural joy is born of union with God.

In the first reading, we see the first Christians placing all their belongings at the apostles' disposal: we can easily imagine them offering not just their material possessions but their personal talents as well. This attitude can only follow from the conviction that our plans do not have the last word: God always knows more than we do.

The joy and fruitfulness of those who trust in God has always been a hallmark of salvation history. Abraham surrendered his future to God and became the father of an innumerable progeny (*Gen* 12:1-2). Moses placed his future in God's hands and freed his people from slavery (*Ex* 3:10). The prophets gave up their future to God and became His voice to the people (*Jer* 1:9). The

apostles abandoned their future in God and became the pillars of the Church (*Mt 4:19*). All of them in one way or another had to overcome their human calculations in order to respond to the Lord's call. None of them started out with everything under control. Saint Josemaría, who also sought to follow God's will in founding Opus Dei with no human resources at his disposal, wrote early on that supernatural joy "comes from the abandonment of everything, including yourself, into the loving arms of our Father God" (*The Way*, 659).

Guadalupe was always cheerful because she let Jesus guide her and be in charge of filling her heart. From the moment she understood that God was calling her to seek holiness through Opus Dei, she was aware that this mission wasn't just a new earthly plan for her, exciting to say the least. She realized that it was

something supernatural, prepared by God from all eternity for her. As she allowed herself to be led by this certitude of faith, God blessed her with a fruitfulness that she could never have imagined, and with a happiness – the hundredfold that Jesus promises his disciples – that we see described in her recently published letters.

The Pope writes that when we discover – through faith – the greatness of God’s love, “we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see; we realize that it contains a great promise of fulfilment, and that a vision of the future opens up before us” (*Lumen Fidei*, 4). Recalling the first time she met Saint Josemaria, Guadalupe wrote, “I clearly sensed that God was speaking to me through that priest ... I felt a great faith – a clear reflection of his own” (Mercedes Eguibar, *Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri*, 2001, p. 271). Let

us ask Our Lord, through Guadalupe's intercession, that He grant us these new eyes of faith so that we might look at our future the way He does.

Another source of this supernatural joy that characterized Guadalupe was her decision to serve others. Seeking our own preferences and comfort in everything might seem to be the route to happiness. But this is not the case. Christ said that whoever wishes to be first should be the servant of all (*Mk 9:35*); that He Himself came down to earth to serve (*Mt 20:28*); and at another moment, that His place among men was "as the one who serves" (*Lk 22:27*). During the Last Supper, He knelt down before His Apostles, washing the feet of each one, and said: "You also ought to wash one another's feet ... If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it" (*Jn 13:14-17*).

Guadalupe was able to keep this joy that we see in her writings and throughout her life, also because every morning upon waking up her first word addressed to God was *Serviam*, “I will serve!” It was a resolution she wanted to keep alive every moment of her day.

Guadalupe’s joy was founded on union with Christ, which led her to forget about herself and to strive to understand each person, proactively seeking out less pleasant tasks in order to facilitate the work of her colleagues. In the second reading, we listened to Saint Paul's words, “I even consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (*Phil 3:8*). A very direct way of getting to know Christ is service. Saint Josemaría knew this by experience, as he made reference to when he wrote, “Only by serving can we know and love Christ and make Him known and loved” (*Christ is Passing By*, 182).

May we not be fooled by trying to find joy in our own comfort: let us dare to serve others! Through great or small acts of service, we will become more and more like Christ Jesus, and come to have a supernatural joy, even in the midst of difficulties and suffering.

Finally, let us consider another aspect underlined in today's Gospel and that also sheds light on Guadalupe's life. After having shown us the path to true happiness in the beatitudes, Jesus invites each one of us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (*Mt 5:13-14*). We are destined to a mission no less important or all-encompassing than this: to be salt and light. Like the flame of the Easter candle that shines in the darkness at the Easter Vigil, Jesus wants each one of us to drive out the shadows around us, so that, like Guadalupe, we can bring the joyful light of our friendship and

affection to others. May we not lose this salt of the Gospel, fruit of a deep faith, so that by entrusting our future to God, we may rejoice in serving those around us.

Once in a meditation Saint Josemaría invited us to thank God specifically for this invitation to be salt and light, “because He has deigned to seek us out as a small grain of salt, a bit of light, so as to put there all of His salt, all of His light, and achieve wonders in the service of souls, in the service of the Church, throughout the whole world” (*Meditation*, 2 October 1964). These past few days of Guadalupe's beatification have reminded us that holiness, which is what God's love calls us to, is a real possibility for all men and women. The path to this goal is found in service to others, with the strength of the Holy Spirit who identifies us with Christ.

We ask the help of our Mother, Holy Mary, who after speaking those words, “May it be done to me according to your word,” “set out and traveled to the hill country in haste” to serve her cousin Elizabeth (*Lk* 1:38-39).

Amen.

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