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Meditations: May 18, Feast of Blessed Guadalupe

Some reflections on the life of Blessed Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázeni that can guide our prayer on her feast day.

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- Guadalupe and ordinary daily life
- Every saint is one of God's great works
- The joy of following Christ

“LIFE IS LIKE A VOYAGE on the sea of history, often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate the route. The true stars in our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true Light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach Him, we also need lights close by – people who shine with his light, and so guide us along the way.”^[1] On her feast day let us look with joy to Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri. She shows us how fully God wants to make us sharers in his holiness here on the earth in ordinary daily events. And therefore her life is a light that is especially close to us.

“Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri is the first layperson of Opus Dei to be set forth as a model of holiness by the Church. This had already happened with the founder of the Work, and

his first successor, Blessed Alvaro. Thus we are especially reminded of the call that God makes to all of us to be holy, as Saint Josemaría preached since 1928 and which was one of the main teachings of the Second Vatican Council (see *Lumen Gentium*, ch. 5). The new Blessed sought to bring this conviction to the people around her, insisting that, with divine grace, union with God is within everyone's reach in the circumstances of ordinary life.”^[2] —

God does not want us to walk alone on the path leading us to happiness. He “never abandons his Church ... He continues to inspire examples of holiness in the Church that bring beauty to her face, fill us with hope, and show us clearly the path we are to follow.”^[3] — We learn from Guadalupe that “holiness means opening one's heart to God and allowing Him to transform us with his love.”^[4] — Happiness is closely tied

to the capacity to open ourselves to the new life God offers us. What is safer than leaving our life in his hands? This doesn't mean being disengaged from what happens around us. Just the opposite: it means grasping more deeply the meaning of the people and events around us because that is where we find God.

“WHEN SHE WAS thirty-seven years old, Guadalupe wrote in a letter to the Founder of Opus Dei from Mexico, ‘I want to be faithful, I want to be useful, and I want to be holy. But the reality is that I still have a long way to go ... But I’m not discouraged and with God’s help and your support and everyone’s, I hope I’ll win through in the end’ (*Letter*, 1 February 1954). This brief statement, ‘I want to be holy,’ is the challenge that Guadalupe accepted for her life and that filled her with happiness. And to achieve it, she didn’t have to do extraordinary things. In the eyes

of the people around her, she was an ordinary person: worried about her family. going from place to place, finishing one task and starting another, trying to correct her defects little by little. Right there, in those struggles that seem small, God performs great works. And He wants to do likewise in the life of each and every one of us.”^[5] —

Saint Paul says to the Corinthians: *Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work* (2 Cor 9:7-8). When we look at Guadalupe's life, we see how attractive is her decision to fulfil all of God's inspirations, her courage in giving herself to others, her supernatural optimism. The immense joy we see in

her life sprang from a heart in love and constantly on the watch for God's will.

“God's great works have not ceased and his power continues to be made manifest in history. Saint Josemaría liked to remind people, with words of the prophet Isaiah: *Non est abbreviata manus Domini (Is 59:1): Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened*. God is no less powerful today than He was at other times. That same Lord wants to keep showing Himself to us in different ways, including through the saints. Each saint is a great work of God, a way of making Himself present in our world, and ‘the most attractive face of the Church,’”^[6] which we too are called to reflect in our own life.

“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 realised 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...

“Another source of this supernatural joy that characterised 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 (cf. *Mk* 9:35), that He Himself came down to earth to serve (cf. *Mt* 20:28);

and at another moment, that His place among men was *as one who serves* (cf. *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 know these things, blessed are you if you do them* (*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."^[7] —

We too want to follow our Lord like this. Guadalupe goes resolutely from one place to another, from one job to another, as if she could hear each time, once more in the depth of her

soul, that call *follow me* of her vocation. “When we discover, through faith, the greatness of God’s love, ‘we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see; we realise 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.”^[8] —

^[1] — Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, no. 49.

^[2] — Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, Homily, 19 May 2019.

[3] Pope Francis, *Letter to Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz*, 12 April 2019.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, Homily, 19 May 2019.

[6] Ibid. Internal quote is from *Gaudete et exultate*, no. 9

[7] Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, Homily, 21 May 2019.

[8] Ibid.