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18 May: Blessed Guadalupe Ortiz de Landazuri

Some reflections on the life of Blessed Guadalupe, whose feast day is celebrated on May 18. The topics are: Guadalupe and ordinary life; each saint is a great work of God; the joy of following our Lord.

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“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 of 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 our way.”^[1] On her feast day, we look to Guadalupe Ortiz de Landazuri to strengthen our joy. She shows us to what extent God wants to let us share in his holiness here on earth in our ordinary daily life. And hence her life is a particularly close light for us.

“Guadalupe Ortiz de Landazuri is the first lay faithful of Opus Dei to be set forth as a model of holiness by the Church. In previous years, the founder, Saint Josemaria, and his first successor, Blessed Alvaro, had already received this distinction. Thus we are especially reminded of the call that God addresses to all of

us to be holy, as Saint Josemaria 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: union with God, through divine grace, is within everyone's reach in the circumstances of ordinary life.”[2]

Go does not want us to travel alone on the path that leads 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] As Pope Francis said, from Guadalupe we learn that “holiness means opening our heart to God and allowing Him to transform us with his Love.”[4] What could be safer than abandoning our own life in his hands? This doesn't mean disregarding the world around us,

but rather just the opposite: paying close attention to people and events, knowing that we can find our Lord there.

“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 phrase – ‘I want to be holy’ – is the challenge that Guadalupe accepted for her life and that filled her with happiness. To achieve it, she did not 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). As we consider Guadalupe's life, how attractive is her forceful decision to follow our Lord's promptings, her courage to give herself to others, her supernatural optimism. Her deep joy sprang from a heart in love and constantly vigilant.

“God’s mighty works have not ended. His power continues to shine forth

throughout history. Saint Josemaria liked to remind us, using words from the prophet Isaiah: *Non est abbreviata manus Domini (Is 59:1)*: ‘The arm of the Lord has not been shortened. God is no less powerful today than He was in other times’ (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 130). The 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’ (Francis, *Gaudete et exsultate*, no. 9),”[6] which we too are called to reflect in our own lives.

“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 letters....

“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 attain 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 went from one place to another, from one occupation to another, with great determination, as through hearing anew in the depths of her soul Christ’s call to “follow me” that the vocation entails.

“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*, no. 4). Recalling the first time she met Saint Josemaria, Guadalupe wrote, 'I sensed clearly that God was speaking to me through that priest ... I felt a great faith – a clear reflection of his own.' Let us ask our Lord, through Guadalupe's intercession, to grant and purify for us these new eyes of faith so that we can view our future the way He does.'[8]

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

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

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

[4] Ibid.

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

[6] Ibid.

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

[8] Ibid.

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