

# Interview with the Postulator of Guadalupe's Cause

As this step makes it possible to beatify Guadalupe Ortiz, Fr. Antonio Rodríguez de Rivera, postulator of her cause, answered some questions. What follows are parts of the interview that the postulator granted on May 4, 2017, when the decree on the heroicity of the virtues of Guadalupe was approved.

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# **1. Pope Francis has just approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of Guadalupe Ortiz. What is it?**

It is the cure – which took place in one night – of a man who suffered basal cell carcinoma. On 28 November 2002, the man, who suffered from this skin cancer next to his right eye, invoked Guadalupe with faith and intensity before going to bed, and when he got up the next day, 29 November 2002, he discovered that he was cured. The lesion had completely disappeared, leaving no signs in its trace. The medical board of the Congregation judged that this occurrence has no scientific explanation. The theological consultants and, later, the cardinals and bishops declared that it must be attributed to the intercession before God of Guadalupe.

## **2. This miracle opens the way for her beatification. Do you know when and where it will take place?**

It is not possible at this time to talk about dates or places, because it is only from the day on which the miracle is approved that the beatification ceremony can begin to be organized. The final decision on the city and the date of the beatification corresponds to the Holy See.

## **3. Can you briefly tell us who was Guadalupe Ortiz?**

She was a woman of outstanding human qualities, cheerful and humble. She had great professional prestige and always led a life of helping others in their spiritual and material needs. She was a person in love with God, full of faith and hope.

She was born in Madrid, Spain, on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe,

1916. She studied Chemistry in Madrid's Central University. In her class, there were only five women. She stood out for seriousness in her studies and a ready smile. After the Spanish Civil War, she graduated and began to teach Physics and Chemistry in the "Colegio de las Irlandesas" (Loreto Nuns High School) and in the Lycee Francaise (French State High School) in Madrid.

Early in 1944 she became acquainted with Opus Dei. Her first encounter with Saint Josemaría affected her deeply. Later she would say: "I had the very clear idea that God was speaking to me through that priest". In that same year she asked for admission in that institution of the Church. She directed some centers of Opus Dei in Madrid and Bilbao. In 1950 she moved to Mexico in order to start apostolic work with women there: it was a great adventurous activity, lived with generosity and

enormous faith. Among other things, she started a center for human and professional development of country women in a rural part of Morelos State.

In 1956 she took up residence in Rome, Italy. There she collaborated with Saint Josemaría in the internal government of Opus Dei. After two years she returned to Spain for health reasons where she re-engaged in teaching and research. She finished her doctoral thesis with the maximum grade and was awarded the Juan de la Cierva Prize. She was a pioneer of the “Centro de Estudios e Investigacion de Ciencias Domesticas” (CEICID) (Center for Studies and Research in Domestic Sciences). Later she was awarded the medal of the “Comite Intenational de la Rayonne et des Fibres Synthetique” for a research study of hers on textile fibers.

Following a heart ailment, she died in Pamplona, already with a reputation for holiness, on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16th, 1975, just 20 days after Saint Josemaría's going to heaven. She was 59 years of age.

#### **4. Why did the Church decide to open her cause for canonization?**

Because those who knew her in Spain, in Mexico and in Italy, are convinced of her holiness, that is, of the exemplary character of her Christian conduct. Many others who after her death, have heard of her heroic life, have recourse to her intercession before God to ask favors of God. What do those people who knew her, say? Here are some quotes:

— “We considered her to be an extraordinary person who stood out because of her virtues”. “She left

behind an unforgettable memory of holiness”

- “It was obvious that she was a daughter of God, who wished to be faithful to His will”
- “One could see she was in love with Our Lord, being full of a profound joy, which simply on getting to know her, was passed on to you”.
- “She had an overflowing joy, habitually; just by laughing she passed on a part of Heaven to you”.
- “I was struck by how she gathered herself together when hearing Mass and receiving Communion every day, by how much she prayed and encouraged us to pray”
- “Her great love for the Church brought her to pray for the Holy Father every day”.

— She worked “united to Our Lord, trying to love and help whoever were around her and she had an apostolic drive which not even her illness managed to diminish”.

— “I desire her canonization because I consider her a saint and I believe that her life is an important example in today’s world”.

## **5. You have studied the life of Guadalupe in depth. Personally, what impressed you the most about her?**

What has most impressed me has been Guadalupe’s “forgetfulness of herself”. She thought constantly of God and of other people. An example of this is what happened in Mexico in 1952. It was during a retreat for university students, in a recently constructed building, still almost without any furniture. On the second-last day, she gave a talk on the Christian virtues. She, as well as

the others, was sitting on the bare floor. She felt a sharp pain from the sting from an insect (it was poisonous, even though she can't know it), but did not want to interrupt the talk until the end, so as not to worry the participants, and none of them realized what had happened. She got sick with a high fever and had to remain in bed for two weeks. At no stage did she complain. Moreover, from her bed she continued performing her various duties until another Opus Dei woman substituted for her. Those who attended her were witnesses: not once did she complain or speak about her illness, but rather took an interest in those who came to visit her and kept encouraging the apostolate.

## **6. What features would you emphasize in Guadalupe's character?**

Many people who knew her underline her overflowing cheerfulness, her habitual smile. She was welcoming to everybody. She transmitted peace and confidence to countrywomen and university students, to women of any social standing. Her joy was not the result of some human effort, but rather the consequence of her knowing that she was a daughter of God, of her closeness to Christ; that is, a gift of the Holy Spirit. As a consequence she was constant and serene. This helped her a lot in her apostolate and her service to the Church and to society.

A young college woman, who met Guadalupe a year after her arrival in Mexico, has remarked: "I must admit I was very curious to meet her, because they all told me about Guadalupe's laugh and about her constant cheerfulness". Guadalupe's own brother Eduardo, describing her last moments, has written: "This was

Guadalupe's great "secret": to always accept as good whatever happened to her. Around her, in those last hours of mortal anguish, all were lost in admiration: that same unforgettable smile"

## **7. Would you say that Guadalupe embodies the "spirit of the Beatitudes" of which Pope Francis speaks in *Gaudete et Exsultate*?**

I think so, because her life, which was very normal and at the same time full of God, is a splendid invitation to open oneself up to others. Her example encourages leaving the comfort zone to dedicate oneself to serving others. Following the path of the Beatitudes, Guadalupe helps us to discover that only with Christ can we have a deep and permanent joy, as the Pope explains in *Gaudete et Exsultate*.

## **8. Is there popular devotion already? What things are people asking of Guadalupe Ortiz?**

Private devotion to Guadalupe is spreading out more and more. Many people are writing to the postulators office to report graces which God has granted them after invoking Guadalupe. In the last 10 years we have received accounts of favors received from Spain, Mexico, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Lithuania, Kenya, India, Venezuela, Ecuador, Guatemala, Porto Rico, United States and Canada.

Another notable sign of her reputation for holiness is that in Zamora, in the state of Michoacan, Mexico, a primary school has been named “Colegio Guadalupe de Ortiz”. This initiative was promoted by some readers of her biography who were impressed by her holiness, her professionalism and her dedication

to education and the formation of young people.

People going to her intercession have received different types of graces: cures, favors related to pregnancy and childbirth, getting employment, resolving conflicts between work and family obligations, resolution of money problems, family reconciliations, helping friends and colleagues to get close to God.

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