



The Holy See

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE HOLY MASS FOR LATIN AMERICA

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Vatican Basilica

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[Multimedia]

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden” (Lk 1:46-48). This is how the Magnificat hymn begins, and through it, Mary becomes the first ‘pedagogue of the Gospel’ (celam, *Puebla*, n. 290): it reminds us of the promises made to our forefathers and invites us to sing the Lord’s mercy.

Mary teaches us that, in the art of mission and of hope, neither many words nor programmes are necessary, her method is very simple: she journeyed and sang.

Mary journeyed

This is how the Gospel presents her to us after the annunciation of the Angel. With haste — but without distress — she journeyed to Elizabeth’s house to accompany her in the final stage of her pregnancy; she journeyed with haste to Jesus when the wine at the wedding feast ran out; and already with hair grayed with the passing of time, she journeyed to Golgotha to stand at the foot of the Cross; on that threshold of darkness and pain, she did not hide nor did she leave: she had journeyed in order to be there.

She journeyed all the way to Tepeyac in order to accompany Juan Diego, and she continues to journey throughout the Continent when, through an image or prayer card, a candle or religious medal, a Rosary or ‘Hail Mary’, she enters a house, a prison cell, a hospital room, a rest home, a school, a rehabilitation clinic ... to say: “Am I not here, who am your Mother?” (*Nican Mopohua*, n.

119). She knew closeness more than anyone else. She is a woman who journeyed with a mother's sensitivity and tenderness; she becomes a guest in family life, looses the knots of the many problems we manage to create, and teaches us to remain standing amid the storms.

At the school of Mary we learn to keep journeying in order to reach the place where we have to be: at the feet of and standing among so many lives who have lost or been robbed of hope. At the school of Mary we learn to journey through the neighbourhood and through the city, not with the comfortable shoes of magical solutions, instant responses and immediate effects; not by dint of fantastic promises of a pseudo progress that, little by little, does nothing but usurp cultural and familial identities and empties our peoples of that vital tissue that has sustained them, and that with the presumptuous proposal of establishing a single and uniform mindset.

At the school of Mary we learn to journey through the city and nourish our heart with the multicultural richness that inhabits the Continent; this when we are able to listen to that hidden heart that beats in our peoples and that safeguards — like a tiny flame under apparent ashes — the meaning of God and of his transcendence, the sacredness of life, respect for creation, the bonds of solidarity, the joy of art and of good living and the ability to be happy and celebrate unconditionally: in this way we are able to understand what America is at heart (cf. [*Incontro con il Comitato Direttivo del Celam, Colombia, 7 September 2017*](#)).

Mary journeyed and Mary sang

Mary journeyed with the joy of one who sang the wonders that God had achieved with the lowliness of his handmaiden. As she walked, as a good Mother, a song arose, giving voice to those who, in one way or another, felt they could not sing. She gives voice to John — who leapt for joy in his mother's womb — she gives voice to Elizabeth — who begins to bless her — to the elderly Simeon — and enables him to prophesy and dream — she teaches the Word to babble his first words.

At the school of Mary we learn that her life is marked not by protagonism but by the capacity to enable others to be protagonists. She offers courage, teaches people to speak, and above all encourages people to live the boldness of faith and hope. In this way she becomes the transparency of the Lord's face who shows his power by inviting and calling people to participate in building up his living temple. She did this with the indigenous Juan Diego and with so many others to whom, enabling them to emerge from anonymity, she gave voice, let them know her own face and her own history and made them protagonists in the latter, in our salvation history. The Lord does not seek self-centred applause or worldly admiration. His glory lies in making his children protagonists of creation. With a mother's heart, she seeks to lift up and restore dignity to all those who, for various reasons and circumstances, have been plunged into abandonment and oblivion.

At the school of Mary we learn the protagonism that has no need to humiliate, mistreat, discredit or ridicule others in order to feel valid or important; that does not resort to physical or psychological violence in order to feel safe or protected. It is the protagonism that is not afraid of tenderness and of touch, and that knows that its best face is service. At her school we learn authentic protagonism to restore dignity to all that has fallen and to do so with the almighty force of divine love, which is the irresistible force of his promise of mercy.

In Mary the Lord rejects the temptation to make protagonists of the force of intimidation and power, of the cry of the strongest or of the practice of imposing oneself on the basis of lies and manipulation. With Mary the Lord safeguards believers so they do not harden their hearts and may constantly know the renewed and renewing power of solidarity, capable of listening to God's pulse beating in the heart of the men and women of our peoples.

Mary, "pedagogue of the Gospel", journeyed and sang throughout our Continent and therefore the Virgin of Guadalupe is not remembered only as indigenous, Spanish, Hispanic or African American. She is simply Latin American: Mother of a fruitful and generous land in which all of us, in one way or another, can encounter one another, playing the role of protagonist in the building of the holy Temple of the family of God.

Latin American son and brother, without fear, may you sing and journey as your Mother did.