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**Homily of the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints at the Beatification of
Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri**

The following is the homily pronounced by the prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, His Eminence Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Becciu, during the Holy Mass for the Beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, layperson (1916-1975), which took place at 11.00 this morning at the Palacio de Vistalegre in Madrid:

Homily of His Eminence Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Becciu

“You are the light of the world” (Mt 5: 14).

Dear brothers and sisters,

Listening to these words of Christ, addressed to the disciples and addressed to us today, we are almost grasped by fear. We would immediately like to respond to the Master: *You* are the light of the world! And in fact we recall what He said of Himself: “I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will ... have the light of life” (*Jn* 8: 12). However, today’s Gospel reading reminds us that Christ says that we too are light in the world, because we received it from Him, He Who came into the world not only to “be the light”, but also to “give light”, to transfer it to the minds and hearts of those who believe in Him. Jesus wants this from us, when He says “you are the light of the world”. In fact he adds: “A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house” (vv.14-15).

We therefore have a task. We have a responsibility for the gift received: the responsibility for the light that has been handed down to us. We cannot merely appropriate it and keep it for ourselves, but rather we are called to communicate it to others, to give it away; we must make it shine “before others” (v.16). Blessed Maria Guadalupe was aware of this truth. She is for us a model of how to draw this light that is Christ, and how to transmit it to our brothers. Indeed, we find ourselves in front of a woman whose life was illuminated only by fidelity to the Gospel. Multifaceted and insightful, she was light for those she met during her life, drawing courage and joy of living from her abandonment to God, to Whose will she adhered day after day and Whose discovery

made her a courageous witness and herald of the Word of God. The source of her fruitful Christian life was her intimate and constant union with Christ. Her dialogue with God, from an early age, was continuous and took place above all through an intense sacramental life and prolonged periods of reflection: the Holy Mass and confession were the pillars of her spiritual experience. The prayer of the rosary, recited with great devotion, was the clear sign of her profound bond with the Mother of God, whose intercession she relied upon. Maria Guadalupe completed a journey of complete and mature prayer, which led her to experience in a profound and mystical way the presence of the Lord and His merciful love. Indeed, it is from contemplation of the Paschal mystery that there emerged the light of truth that guided her steps. The same light made her a “lantern” placed “on a stand to give light to all in the house” (v.15).

The cross soon appeared in her life. In the terrible period of the civil war she accepted with heroic fortitude, the fruit of equally heroic faith, hope and charity, the tragic shooting of her father, the dangers of the armed conflict, moving away from Madrid, poverty and the interruption of her studies. In the midst of such a spiritual and material desert there came the encounter that would totally change her existence. Touched by “Grace”, experienced during a Sunday Mass, she felt the desire to meet someone who would help her find more comprehensive answers to her spiritual needs and so, through a friend, she came into contact with the Founder of *Opus Dei*. This discussion constituted a decisive step towards a life of total self-giving to God. Entering the *Opus*, she made herself willing, with an enthusiastic and generous spirit, to communicate everywhere and to anyone the joy of discovering the “precious pearl”, and began to carry out an intense apostolate in various localities, forming friendships easily and everywhere with young people who were edified by her faith, piety, charity, and healthy and contagious joy. By now she had understood that the union with God could not be limited to the moment of prayer in the chapel, but that the whole day was offered to her to intensify her relationship with the Lord. One of her spiritual characteristics was to transform everything she did into prayer. In this regard, she loved to repeat that it is necessary to: “walk with your feet on the ground but always looking towards the sky, to better see what is happening around us” (*Informatio*, Section II, Documented biography, p. 46).

When the Founder, Escrivá de Balaguer, asked her if she was willing to go to Mexico to establish the *Opus*, she accepted immediately and with joy. By now she had no interest other than being a docile instrument in the hands of God. To overcome the understandable family difficulties, to prepare herself spiritually to accomplish what God asked of her, she entrusted herself to Our Lady of Guadalupe. In Mexico, her apostolic work was based on the love of God, which translated into a life of piety and abandonment in His hands, of missionary zeal; she was concerned above all with training new recruits well and insisted on the need for perseverance; and she built with her spirit of prayer, sobriety and penitence. It was clear that she worked only for the glory of God and for the extension of His kingdom.

Destined for Rome, with governing responsibility, she was as obedient, humble and cheerful as ever, devoting herself to office work and prayer. Returning to Spain, she resumed teaching and training the young women of the *Opus*: it was the time of a steadfast, constant, generous and joyful commitment to living the Gospel with ever more radicalism; it was a conscious response to the love of God, which she always felt most of all in the most tragic moments of her existence, with the intention of becoming a saint and, following the spirituality of *Opus Dei*, strongly inspired by the desire to involve the as many brothers and sisters as possible in the same adventure.

Blessed Maria Guadalupe was able, in all circumstances, to be a gift for others, especially by caring for the formation of female students and dedicating herself to scientific research to promote the progress of humanity. Moreover, her heart was always open to the needs of others, translated into acceptance and understanding. In all circumstances she proved to be a strong woman. Her fortitude was particularly evident in difficulty, in the implementation of new apostolic works, in the evangelization of the frontier and, above all, in the patient acceptance of sufferings of a physical nature, which heavily conditioned her experience. She was able to accept everything without reservations and without complaints, transforming infirmities into a precious offering to the Almighty and an opportunity for profound union with Christ Crucified.

The new Blessed communicates to us Christians today that it is possible to harmonize prayer and action, contemplation and work, in accordance with a lifestyle that leads us to trust in God and to feel that we are an expression of His will to live in every moment. Furthermore, she teaches us how beautiful and attractive it is to possess the capacity to listen and a joyful attitude even in the most painful situations. Maria Guadalupe thus

appears to us as a model of a Christian woman always committed where God's plan wants her to be, specifically in social and scientific research. Ultimately she was a gift for the whole Church, and is a good example to follow.

His wealth of faith, hope and charity is an admirable demonstration of what the Second Vatican Council said about the call of all the faithful to holiness, specifying that each person pursue this goal "following his own path" (*Lumen gentium*, 41). This indication of the Council finds today a complete realization with the Beatification of this woman, to whose prayer and intercession we turn so as increasingly to be witnesses of the light of Christ and lamps that illuminate the darkness of our time.

Yes, let us invoke her: Blessed Maria Guadalupe, pray for us!
