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Holy Mass for the Liturgical Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Guadalupe

At 18.00 today, Wednesday of the second week of Advent, in the Vatican Basilica, the Holy Father Francis presided at the Eucharistic celebration for the liturgical feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Guadalupe.

The following is the homily the Holy Father pronounced during the Holy Mass:

Homily of the Holy Father

“My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant” (*Lk* 1: 46-48). Thus begins the hymn of the Magnificat and, through this, Mary gives her first “Gospel teaching” (CELAM, *Puebla*, 290): she reminds us of the promises made to our forefathers and invites us to sing of the mercy of the Lord.

Mary teaches us that, in the art of the mission and of hope, it is not necessary to have many words or plans. Her method is very simple: journey and sing.

Journey

In this way she presents the Gospel following the annunciation of the Angel. In haste – but not anxiously – she journeyed to Elizabeth’s home to accompany her in the final stage of her pregnancy; she hurriedly walk in haste to Jesus when wine was lacking at the wedding; and already with grey hair from the passing of the years, she walked to Golgotha to be at the foot of the cross: in that threshold of darkness and pain, she did not go away: she walked to be there.

She journeyed to Tepeyac to accompany Juan Diego, and continues walking the Continent when, by means of an image or stamp, a candle or a medal, a rosary or Hail Mary, she enters a house, a prison cell, a hospital ward, a nursing home, a school, a rehabilitation clinic ... to say: “Am I not here, I who am your mother?” (*Nican*

Mopohua, 119) She more than anyone knew about closeness. She is a woman who walks with the delicacy and tenderness of a mother, who takes her place in family life, untying the knots of so many wrongs we manage to generate, and teaching us to stay in our feet in the midst of storms. In the school of Mary we learn to stay in motion to get to where we need to be: on our feet and standing before many lives that have lost, or have been robbed of, hope.

In the school of Mary we learn to journey the neighbourhood and the city not in slippers, with magic solutions, instantaneous responses with immediate effects, not by dint of fantastical promises of pseudo-progress that succeed only, little by little, in harming and usurping cultural and family identities, and eliminating that vital fabric that has sustained our people, with the pretentious aim of establishing a single and uniform way of thinking.

In the school of Mary we learn to walk the city streets, and we nourish our hearts with the multicultural wealth that inhabits the Continent; when we are able to listen to that recondite heart that beats in our villages and that conserves – like a small ember under apparent ashes – the meaning of God and His transcendence, the sacredness of life, respect for creation, bonds of solidarity, the joy of the art of living well and the ability to be happy and celebrate unconditionally, there we come to understand what is the depth of America (see *Meeting with the CELAM Steering Committee*, Colombia, 7 September 2017).

Mary journeys and Mary sings

Mary journeys, carrying the joy of one sings of the wonders that God has worked with the smallness of His servant. In her wake, like a good Mother, she inspires song by giving voice to so many who in one way or another felt they could not sing. She gives the word to John, who leaps in his mother's womb; she gives the word to Elizabeth, who begins to bless; to the elderly Simeon, making him prophesy and dream; and she teaches the Word to utter his first words.

In the school of Mary we learn that her life is marked not by protagonism but rather by the capacity to enable others to become protagonists. She gives courage, she teaches them to speak and, above all, she encourages them to live the boldness of faith and hope. In this way she gives transparency to the face of the Lord Who shows His power by inviting participation and convoking the construction of His living temple. He did so with the young Indian Juan Diego and with so many others, taking them out of anonymity, and giving them a voice, making their faces and stories known, and making them the protagonists of this, our story of salvation. The Lord does not seek selfish applause or worldly admiration. His glory lies in making His children protagonists of creation. With the heart of a mother, she seeks to raise and dignify all those who, for different reasons and circumstances, were immersed in abandonment and oblivion.

In the school of Mary we learn that protagonism does not mean humiliating, mistreating, discrediting or mocking others to feel we are valuable or important; that it does not resort to physical or psychological violence to feel secure or protected. Leadership is not afraid of tenderness or caresses, and that knows that its best face is service. In her school we learn authentic centrality, dignifying all who have fallen and doing so with the almighty force of divine love, which is the irresistible force of His promise of mercy.

In Mary, the Lord denies the temptation to give prominence to the force of intimidation and power, to the cry of the strongest or assertion based on lies and manipulation. With Mary, the Lord protects believers so that their hearts are not hardened and so they can constantly know the renewed and renewing strength of solidarity, capable of listening to the beat of God in the hearts of the men and women of our peoples.

María, “teacher of the Gospel”, walked and sang our Continent and so the *Guadalupeana* is not remembered merely as indigenous, Spanish, Hispanic or African-American. She is simply Latin American: the mother of a fertile and generous land in which in one way or another we can all find ourselves playing a leading role in the construction of the Holy Temple of the family of God.

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