

Pilgrimage to the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe

August 24, 2023. St. Bartholomew, one of our first fathers

Mother of God and our Mother, Our Lady of Guadalupe, we come before you walking today, pilgrims of hope in communion. We come today to the hill of Tepeyac and celebrate the mystery of your Son's love in this basilica that guards your image. We walk with the Oblates and lay associates of Mexico who are celebrating the 80th anniversary of their missionary pilgrimage through Mexican lands. Together with them we walk with representatives of all Latin America and of our charismatic family from all over the world. We come in the name of many men and women, lay and consecrated, who feel in our hearts beating strongly the advice of our Founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod, who asked us to always have you as our mother and to profess to you a tender and sincere devotion. How beautiful you are Mary, Virgin of Guadalupe, in your figure imprinted on the tilma that we venerate today!

Drawn by this beauty, we want to consecrate to you today our Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and all the members of our charismatic family. We consecrate to you our works and missions, the elderly and the young, the healthy and the sick, our communities and families and also all the people we serve and in a more particular way the poor and most vulnerable who honor us by allowing us to be of service to them. We entrust to you our missionary sufferings and joys, knowing that you will turn them into a joyful proclamation of the Gospel.

Virgin of Guadalupe, look at us with your merciful eyes and may each one of our persons be engraved in your pupils, look at us and help us to always better serve God and his Kingdom, to serve and love the poorest and most vulnerable. Look upon us and transform our weakness into strength that puts itself at the service, our cowardice into missionary audacity, our lukewarmness into evangelical fire. Help us to try everything to proclaim Christ and his Kingdom to the most abandoned. Help us to let ourselves be watched by you, to be upright and truthful. May your gaze console us, transform us and encourage us to be the cooperators of your Son and to live our lives totally dedicated to the plan of salvation for all men as you yourself did, disciple and missionary of your Son Jesus Christ.

Let us also contemplate your image miraculously imprinted on this tilma that for centuries announces your message, a message of joy for the poor and simple, a message of communion among peoples, a message of hope. As we contemplate your hands and your dark complexion, we welcome the proclamation of that new humanity in which all men of all races and of all times are called to participate in the communion of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. A perfect communion in which neither diversity nor the identity of each one is diluted. In you we see the model of interculturality that gives the world the hope of a new humanity in which, without renouncing our roots, we place ourselves at the service of a communion that anticipates and announces the definitive communion in the bosom of the Father. Your dark complexion is already the fulfilled reality of the Good News that transcends our limits and frontiers and announces the universal fraternity that we commit ourselves to build according to the Gospel.

In your praying hands we take refuge: pray for us and with you help us to pray for all humanity, Mother of Mercy. Praying hands that welcome and guard the Word of God until it becomes flesh and life in our history. Praying hands that are the hands of the young worker

in the house of Nazareth who knows how to find the presence of God in everything and everyone. As we consecrate ourselves today to you, Virgin of Guadalupe, help us to be always contemplative in action, to welcome the Holy Spirit and to let ourselves always be guided by HIM so that we can always say Yes to God with a life given in oblation, an oblation that is always renewed in our missionary commitment.

In your blessed womb is already present your son who, as the Son of God, shines as a new light that illuminates our nights. A divine light, Mother of Guadalupe, that you carry in your womb to give to the world for which He alone is the hope. Your Son Jesus shines in your womb and in your pilgrimage you sow light and joy. We are pilgrims with the Church that walks synodically and we want to be those who remember and prolong your journey on this earth. Mother of missionary unity, walk always with us, do not let go of our hand. May we always walk in communion with the Church and with our pastors, especially may we walk in communion with the Pope. Like St. Juan Diego sent by you to the bishop, may we know how to be sowers of communion in the People of God, walking in humility, working for peace, reconciliation and harmony, seeking paths to walk in unity with all Christians, also on pilgrimage in dialogue with those who follow the way in other religions, in dialogue with all men and women of our societies, building together universal brotherhood. Come with us to walk since you are here and you are the mother of all humanity!

Mother of the new creation, your starry mantle invites us to contemplate the heavens. Your dress speaks to us of a creation where so many native peoples have seen the divine presence. Give us the grace to care for our common home and to care with tenderness and respect for all creation. May we work for justice and peace to recover that harmony that reflects your image and of which you are a proclamation, because in you, Immaculate Mother, God has already worked the definitive victory over all evil, over all death, over all sin. May we proclaim, in word and deed, this divine victory over evil by embracing with you a simple life inspired by the Gospel. A life inspired by your song of praise to God, exalting his mercy and justice, choosing to be with and serve the humble and poor in order to announce the salvation that is already dawning.

May your flowing hair, a sign of virginity and integrity, help us to live with a pure heart so that we may be blessed and be able to contemplate God. May we live evangelical poverty in order to proclaim the Kingdom and the obedience of those who cooperate with your Son, as you did at the foot of the cross, helping him to fulfill the will of the Father to the end. Give us, Mary, the gift of perseverance so that our brothers and sisters may reach joy and fullness in their life and mission.

Holy Mary, Virgin of Guadalupe: we are your Oblates. May your shy smile strengthen us. You are here and you are our Mother, do not leave your children abandoned. Choose us to carry your message of evangelical joy to the poorest and make us bold in the face of every danger, give us the strength to go on pilgrimage growing in faith, hope and love so that we may be those holy missionaries that St. Eugene de Mazenod dreamed of, preaching the Good News to the most abandoned and being pilgrims of hope in communion. As we leave your holy temple, may your image be engraved in our hearts so that we may be an extension of you, Mary, in the Church; may we be Mary in the Mission, may we be Mary caring for the poorest and most vulnerable as you cared for your Son and tenderly care for us today. Thank you Mary for having brought us here to consecrate ourselves in body, soul and spirit to you, Virgin of Guadalupe. We ask your holy blessing and that of your Son, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen

Mexico, in the Basilica of Our Lady the Virgin of Guadalupe

Luis Ignacio Rois Alonso, OMI

Superior General