



“Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom”

2010 Consecration
Homily by

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Praised be Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.

Our Lord reminds us today that our Christian life itself and, therefore, also our engagement in the apostolate are fundamentally a daily act of hope, the hope founded securely upon what the faith teaches us and upon the love poured out into our hearts in the Church. Our Lord says to us, as He said to the disciples: “Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom” (*Lk* 12:32). Surely, the challenges and the temptations encountered in following Christ and in taking up, with Him, the apostolate are great and formidable.

Being a Christian and carrying out an apostolate in the Church is not for the faint-hearted, but for those who “gird [their] loins and light [their] lamps,” those who are vigilant, especially as the day wears on and the temptations to discouragement or to carelessness grow more fierce (*Lk* 12:35). But indeed God the Father has given the Kingdom into our care as His “faithful and prudent steward[s],” who are always ready to give an account of our stewardship (*Lk* 12:42). Recognizing the confidence which Our Lord has placed in us, how can we give way to discouragement, how can we doubt that Our Lord will bring forth good fruits from our daily efforts to live in Him and to carry out His work as His faithful disciples?

What is more, we carry out our stewardship of the Kingdom in an unbroken line of faithful sons and daughters of Our Lord, beginning with Abraham, our father in the faith (cf. *Rom* 4:16-17). Those who have gone before us give us assurance that, with the help of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, we can accomplish all that God the Father is asking of us. Abraham and those who are his descendants in the faith teach us to work with all our strength to transform our world, while keeping our eyes focused on “a better homeland,” our lasting home in Heaven (*Heb* 11:16). The people of Israel, at the time of the Exodus, for example, needed extraordinary hope founded on faith in God’s promises and the gift of His love given to them. The *Book of Wisdom* tells us that they “awaited the salvation of the just and the destruction of their foes,” placing all of their hope in God’s promises enunciated in the covenant which He had established with them (*Wis* 18:7). So, too, must we be filled with the hope which has its foundation in God’s promise of salvation.

You who are already consecrated Marian Catechists and you who will be consecrated are stewards of the Kingdom,
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stewards of the great Mystery of Faith, which by your apostolate is made more deeply known to the catechized and is made more ardently loved by them. Given the completely secularized culture in which we live, you are understandably tempted to doubt and fear regarding the fruitfulness of your stewardship, of your apostolate. But Our Lord bids you to be afraid no longer. In fact, all of the spiritual formation which you as a Marian Catechist have received and the regular spiritual practices which are essential to the apostolate of a Marian Catechists, draw you, every day, nearer to Our Lord, most especially in the Sacrament of His Real Presence and in the Sacrament of Penance. Drawing near to Our Lord, you contact directly the foundation of your hope, the source of your generous and loyal engagement in the apostolate. Your communion with the Lord, praying before Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament and receiving Him into your souls in Holy Communion, dispels your doubt and fear, and must be the principal font of your unfailing hope.

The Consecration of the Marian Catechist is made to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, ever open to pour out upon the Church and upon us, the Church’s members, the abundant gifts of God’s mercy and love toward all men. The Marian Catechist cultivates the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Church’s favored devotion, for it helps us to live each day in the presence of the Lord Whom we know and receive in the Most Holy Eucharist. Devotion to the Sacred Heart helps us renew throughout each day our sacramental communion with the Lord. Through devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we draw ever more upon the grace of our Baptism and Confirmation, which is nourished by the Heavenly Food of the Body of Christ, so that Christ may be known, be loved and be served by all men.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus also helps us to recognize our sins which offend God, which take for granted and even betray His love, and to confess them and make reparation for the offense which they have given to God. Devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we have a great love of the Sacrament of Penance, of the personal encounter with Christ, in which we confess our sins and He pours out from His glorious pierced Heart the grace of forgiveness and strength for the struggle to lead a good and holy life. The Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Penance, from which flows devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to which devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus leads, are the ultimate source and highest expression of the spiritual life of every Christian and, therefore, of every Marian Catechist.

You are catechists who rightly call yourselves “Marian,” for the Blessed Virgin Mary is God’s chosen instrument through which Our Lord Jesus Christ took our human nature and came to dwell among us to save us from sin and eternal death, and she is, therefore, also the instrument by which Our Lord continues to come to all men. She is the Mother of God, the chosen instrument of the Incarnation, and she is also God’s chosen instrument by which all grace comes to us from her Divine Son in the Church. It is she, whom Christ gave to us as our Mother as He was dying on the cross. As our Mother, she constantly intercedes for us, her beloved sons and daughters, and spiritually

accompanies us all along the way of our earthly pilgrimage home to God the Father. As our Mother, she lovingly takes us in her arms, under her mantle, to protect us and to guide us to her Divine Son. As Marian Catechists, we, first of all, recognize the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of God and Mother of the Church, and, then, we seek to imitate her Divine Maternity in our apostolate of catechesis by bringing many to Christ Who alone is our salvation.

The saintly founder of the Marian Catechist Apostolate, the Servant of God Father John Anthony Hardon of the Society of Jesus, placed the Apostolate into the all-loving care of the Blessed Virgin Mary under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, for in her apparitions to Saint Juan Diego in 1531, Our Lady showed herself, in a most wonderful way, to be the Mother and Model of Catechists. Everything about her apparitions, her message, and her enduring image, imprinted by God on the mantle of Saint Juan Diego, draws us to a deeper understanding of the Mystery of the Redemptive Incarnation, the Mystery of Faith.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, teaches you as catechists the hope which marked every moment of her life and she intercedes for you, that you may always carry out the apostolate, filled with hope. Of her, Saint Elizabeth declared: "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (*Lk* 1:45). We pray today that your consecration as Marian Catechists will manifest itself in the hope with which you carry out the apostolate. May all Marian Catechists imitate Our Lady of Guadalupe by teaching the faith with the firm conviction that what they are teaching is fulfilled in their lives.

The spiritual practices of the Marian Catechist will help you to place your hearts steadfastly into the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, to seek the real encounter with Our Lord which is ours in the Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Penance. Through the *Way of the Cross*, you will keep alive in your minds and hearts the reality of the Passion and Death of Our Lord, the great act of God's love for us, which is made ever present for us in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and is the source of the forgiveness of our sins in Confession.

In a similar way, through the praying of the *Holy Rosary*, you will meditate on the many mysteries which are all part of the great Mystery of the Redemptive Incarnation, and you will be led to call upon the help of God's saving grace, filled with confidence in the divine assistance which comes to us through this most powerful prayer. At morning, at noon, and at night, you will pray the *Angelus*, deeply conscious of the reality of the grace of the Redemptive Incarnation at work in your lives and in the world.

In the morning, you will make the *Morning Offering*, placing your hearts, together with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, into the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus. Through the *Morning Offering*, you will mystically join yourselves to the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In union with the Church throughout the world, you will offer the entire day to Our Lord in accord with His intentions, in reparation for our sins, and in petition of mercy and love on behalf of

those who are most in need.

In the evening, you will examine your consciences, acknowledge your sins before Our Lord, and make the *Act of Contrition*. Having offered your entire life to Our Lord by the *Morning Offering*, you will confess, with sorrow, your failure to honor that offering, while, at the same time, you will place your lives into the hands of Our Lord before falling into sleep. Before giving yourselves over to unconsciousness, you will place your hearts once again into the Sacred Heart of Jesus, trusting that His promise of salvation will be fulfilled in your lives, whether you wake to begin a new day or remain asleep in death.

Let us now lift up our hearts, together with the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin of Guadalupe, to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, from which, through the Eucharistic Sacrifice, flows the gift of His life given up for us. Let us now give our hearts totally into His Sacred Heart, from which He will sustain us with the Heavenly Bread which is His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity on our earthly pilgrimage and in the apostolate of catechesis. One in heart with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, let us pray for all who will make today the Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Marian Catechist Apostolate and for who will renew the Consecration, that, with the help of the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, they will carry out the apostolate of catechesis, filled with hope, filled with her trust that God's promises will indeed be fulfilled in our lives. Let us pray for them, that by their fidelity to the spiritual practices of the Marian Catechist Apostolate, their hearts, together with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, will be always one with the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Heart of Jesus, in Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, have mercy on us.
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America and Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us.
Saint Juan Diego, pray for us.
Servant of God, Father John Anthony Hardon, pray for us.

Homily given at Marian Catechist Apostolate Consecration Weekend Sunday Liturgy, August 8, 2010, Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe.
Readings: Wis 18:6-9; *Ps* 33:1, 12, 18-19, 20-22; *Heb* 11:1-2, 8-19; *Lk* 12:32-48