

**Homily – 50th Anniversary Mass for Sr. Elizabeth Ann Vasquez
December 3, 2022**

In the scope human life, 50 years already begin to strike us as “for ever”. What a blessing! In the words of Hosea, the Lord says: *“I will espouse you to me forever... in right and in justice, in love and in mercy...”* Faithfully! The Lord is always faithful to his promises. The moment we begin to imitate him, our heart blossoms in awe at the glory of God.

“We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.” (1Jn). All we must do is to remain in His love. More than a task or a duty, it is a privilege. The Holy Spirit enables us to imitate the love Jesus has for us, as he has imitated the Father’s love for him. So great is the Father’s love, that he sent his only Son into the world to offer himself as a sacrificial victim, *“so that we might have life through him.”* (1Jn). Rather than being our ticket to heaven, following the Lord’s commandment of love is proof that we have already been saved. However, Saint John says, *“Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”* (1Jn 3:3).

As impressive as 50 years are for us, what are they in the expanse of eternity? The Incarnation of the baby – for whose coming we are preparing throughout the season of Advent – turns our nothingness into God’s promise. So to speak, he turns our earthly dust into clusters of celestial galaxies. It is *“a marvel in our eyes.”*

(Ps 118:23). Even though we have not known the day nor the hour, we do know that every step forward is a step closer. *“This is the work of the Lord.”* (Id.).

Pope Francis has said: *“God’s faithfulness is a feast; it is a party to which we are invited for free. And it is a party for all of us. God’s faithfulness is patient: he is patient with his people, he listens to them, he guides them, he explains slowly and warms their hearts... God’s fidelity always precedes us and our fidelity is always the response to that faithfulness that precedes us. He is the God who always precedes us. And the almond blossom blooms first in spring. To be faithful is to praise this fidelity, to be faithful to this fidelity. It is a response to this fidelity.”*

50 years is just the beginning! Congratulations, Sr. Elizabeth! You have been faithful, but the Lord is even more. We wish you at least another 50 years of faithful and fruitful religious life. May you always remain in God and God in you.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe continue to be your tender companion, as the perfect model for consecrated life and the most powerful intercessor.