

**Homily – Vespers
Lumen Gentium Awards – February 2, 2022**

We just recited an ancient promise of God which fills us with confidence: “Sit on my right: your foes I will put beneath your feet.” (Ps 110). But who are our foes? In our divided world, people are tempted to find adversaries not so much where sin stalks them, but even among those who belong to a different group or who have sought an identity elsewhere.

We are aware of our need for God’s help and He does not abandon us. “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. (Hb). While remaining close to us, Jesus is the One who is sitting on the right hand of the Father to intercede for us. His prayer is that we may be one, like He and the Father are One with the Holy Spirit. We are sent forth to be agents of a kind of unity that is beyond appearance; one that is not the work of our hands, but the fruit of the Holy Spirit, working in us and through us.

In the midst of increasing alienation, your constant effort to reach out to God’s chosen ones – reminding them that they have been “made worthy to share the lot of the saints in light” (Col) – make of you beacons of hope for them and for us. This moment of prayer expresses the gratitude of the bishops and mine for your love to God and the Church, in the service of your sisters and brothers. In Christ, you truly are “Lumen Gentium”, the light of peoples. You are agents of synodality and ambassadors of Pope Francis, who speaks for the Holy Spirit as he summons us to be a more synodal Church. Through your steadfast commitment to serve in your parishes, you are helping countless people experience the closeness of Jesus. Let us “confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.” (Hb).

Blessed Mother of Guadalupe, make of us agents of a synodality as members of the one Body of your Son, the light of the world.