

Homily – Saturday of the Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time Catholic Women's Conference – July 27, 2024

My dear sisters in Christ, together, let us embrace the Lord's patience, allowing Him to find us in our moments of stillness and prayer. Gathered around the Lord' table, let us allow the Holy Spirit to unite us in our mission to bring the love and justice of God to the world, collaborating with Him to make his house a lovely dwelling place, as women know how to do. And let me suggest to you the example of Mary Magdalene, who listened for God's call in her heart and shared the joy of the Resurrection with the Apostles.

The Lord is patient with us. In a world driven by haste, we must learn to slow down and make room for the encounter with God. It is in these moments of stillness that we can truly hear His voice. While we may believe that we are seeking God, it is ultimately He who finds us.

Jeremiah's call to repentance and conversion emphasizes that our words and actions must align. We cannot merely boast about our faith or our place in God's house if our behavior contradicts His teachings. Our places of worship, and indeed our hearts, must reflect our dedication to God through prayer and good works.

The Eucharistic liturgy is the summit of our Christian life and the source from which all our spiritual power flows. It is here, in the celebration of the Mass, that we are united as one body in Christ. The Eucharist is not a private devotion, but God's work through his People, which brings us together, strengthening our bonds with each other and with God.

In the Eucharist, we find the ultimate expression of moral justice and unity. It is through this sacred celebration that we are reminded of our mission in the world: to live out the Gospel and to bring God's love and justice to all. The Mass sends us forth, impelled by the love of Christ, to be His witnesses in a world that desperately needs His healing and peace.

Mary Magdalene offers a profound example for all women in the Church. When Jesus asks Mary, “Why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” He invites her to reflect deeply on her sorrow and her search. In seeking a dead body, she encounters the Living God. It is only when Jesus calls her by name that she recognizes Him. It is like a mother’s call to her child by name. (We all know what it means when a mother calls her children using their whole name). This moment of recognition is a powerful revelation: God is already in our hearts, calling us by name.

Mary’s experience teaches us that our search for God is fulfilled when we listen for His call in the depths of our hearts. This intimate, personal encounter with Jesus must be constantly renewed, and we must pray for the grace to recognize Him in our lives continually. Upon recognizing Jesus, Mary is given a mission: to go and tell the disciples of His resurrection. She becomes the Apostle to the Apostles, propelled by her encounter with the risen Lord to share the joy of the Resurrection.

Are we truly living out our faith, or are we hiding behind a facade of religiosity? Jesus criticized the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of His time. We must be vigilant not to fall into the same trap. Our faith must be genuine, reflected in the fruit it bears through our witness to announce the good news of the Lord who has come to our encounter.

Pope Francis has said: *“In the history of salvation, it was a woman who welcomed God’s Word. Women too kept alive the flame of faith in the dark night, awaiting and then proclaiming the Resurrection. Women find deep and joyful fulfilment in precisely these two acts: welcoming and proclaiming.”*

May the confidence given through the protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe impel us to live out our faith authentically, with patience, humility, and a fervent desire to do God’s will.