

Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri:

The Sanctification of Work as Seen in Her Letters to Saint Josemaría

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Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri was beatified in Madrid on May 18, 2019. She is the first lay member of Opus Dei set forth by the Church as an intercessor and example of holiness for all Christians. This study focuses on her awareness of the importance of sanctifying her daily work, a key element in the message of Saint Josemaría. It considers some of the key concepts involved in the call to sanctity in professional work, and describes the historical sources available for understanding Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri's life. We will also consider how her awareness of the importance of sanctifying her work is reflected in her letters to St. Josemaría, and how her life embodies the vocation to sanctity in the midst of one's daily professional tasks.

Woman and man are a divine creation.¹ Both are called to live freely in perfect harmony with God, and both have received the mission to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it,” which includes as a gift the vocation to work as a form of relationship with God and other men and women.² Created in the image and likeness of the triune God, they are called to see all men and women as persons who deserve to be loved, and to engage creatively in the transformation of the world around them, in service to the common good through their free personal initiative.

After our first parents' sin, the order of creation was disrupted. Work began to be seen more as a punishment than as a path for personal fulfillment and for contributing to the good of society. In some cases work even became a form of domination rather than service. But our focus here is not on the history of the philosophical and theological perception of work.³ Rather we are going

1. Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, no. 6.

2. Ernst Burkhardt – Javier López, *Ordinary Life and Holiness the Teachings of St. Josemaría Escrivá*, Vol 1 (Scepter 2017). Volume 1 of this three-volume work has been translated and published by Scepter in English. Volume 3, in chapter 7, section 1.4, *The Sanctification of Temporal Realities*, presents the theological teachings of St. Josemaría needed to understand that the vocation to work is a gift from God.

3. Cf. the work by Ernst Burkhardt – Javier López for a philosophical, historical and theological introduction to the topic.

to consider the call to work as a gift received by all men and women, and specifically by Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri at a specific time and place, through her vocation to holiness in Opus Dei. In doing so, we will consider her loving response, in both great and small things, to God's love.⁴

On October 2, 1928, the date of Opus Dei's founding, the universal call to holiness, which had gradually been forgotten by Christians themselves, reappeared clearly on the horizon of history. The divine nature of this message and its transforming power, perceived by the young priest Josemaría Escrivá, led him to kneel down gratefully in his room, with the determination to carry it out.⁵ He saw that his specific calling within his priestly vocation was to extend to all men and women the invitation to be saints in the middle of the world through their work and the fulfillment of their ordinary daily duties.⁶ Each was to do so freely and faithfully, in their own environment, daily circumstances and family. It was a call not to human "perfectionism," but to holiness.

1. *A universal invitation: to be saints working in the middle of the world.*

The extensive study by Burkhart and López mentioned above provides a clear overview of what it means to sanctify work, to sanctify oneself through work, and to sanctify others through one's work. Thus human history acquires its deepest meaning as part of the history of salvation, which God brings about in Christ through the free acts of men and women. "God himself wants to 'provoke' our freedom, in the midst of our daily work and endeavors."⁷

Christians are called to live Christ's life in today's world. To the extent that the process of secularization has been implanted in developed societies as a substitute for modernity, and has presented Christianity as a lack of understanding of progress, the greater the need there is to contribute to the history of salvation by furthering the salvation of history.⁸ Christians are called to perfect the world and help bring about temporal progress, fostering the common

4. The spirituality of Opus Dei is based on the sanctification of one's daily work and obligations.

5. Josemaría Escrivá was making a spiritual retreat in Madrid. He had been praying for over ten years that God would let him see what he wanted from him.

6. St. Josemaría said that he had become a priest sensing that God had a specific plan for him — alongside his priestly vocation — that would involve more than simply following an ecclesiastical career.

7. Juan José Sanguinetti, "La libertad en el centro del mensaje del Beato Josemaría Escrivá," in *La grandezza della vita quotidiana*, Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, vol. III (Antonio Malo, Ed.), *La dignità della persona umana*, Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, 2013, pp. 81-99 (vid. p. 95).

8. Cf. Ernst Burkhart - Javier López, 2013, vol. 1, pp. 132-145. I am aware of how I have simplified their argument for this short article.

good. Christ saves history with the collaboration of Christians. However the redemptive value of work is the love for God that each person puts into their work, not success or human recognition. The Kingdom of God consists not “in a better state of affairs in the world, but in a better state of hearts.”⁹ As Maria Aparecida Ferrari writes, “to sanctify oneself is to unite oneself to God, to cooperate with the grace that enriches each person and transforms the world.”¹⁰

And usually what enables a person to make this contribution to society is one’s professional work and the training one has received. Certainly one’s family obligations and work in the home are also included here, as well as one’s duties as a citizen. But in general, every individual is recognized or identified in terms of the work one carries out. Jesus of Nazareth was known as the son of the carpenter or craftsman, as Rabbi or as the prophet of Galilee.¹¹

St. Josemaría understood that to sanctify our daily work means to convert it into prayer, which comes about by carrying out our daily tasks with love for God.¹² Redeemed and redeeming work reconfigures any task as a gift from God. Moreover, it encourages the creative dimension of human life, enhances one’s personality and places each person in a specific environment. There each Christian is present in the world by his or her own right, and contributes to the creation of a “we.” The “salvation of history” through work consists in placing Christ at the summit of each one’s daily activities with free and personal decisions, with a passionate love for the world, with a lay mentality and a priestly soul.

In 1930, when Guadalupe was still in high school, Josemaría Escrivá received the light that God also wanted women to be in Opus Dei, who would sanctify their daily work and teach many others to sanctify it.

2. *Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri (1916–75). Bibliography and documentary sources for her life.*

At the beginning of the 20th century, the vast majority of women who earned a salary worked manually or in occupations viewed as a social projection of the family: teachers, nurses, dressmakers... Many women also worked as

9. Ernst Burkhardt – Javier López, 2013, vol. 1, p. 142.

10. Cf. *Holiness Through Work* (edited by Maria Ferrari: Scepter Publishers 2019).

11. In a recent article by Professor López Díaz, J. “Nota histórica y teológica sobre la santificación del trabajo,” the author mentions some lay people who responded to the call to sanctify their work and are in the process of beatification and identifies them by their profession “Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, professor of Chemistry ... the engineer Isidoro Zorzano ... the student Montserrat Grases ... the Swiss engineer Toni Zweifel.... Cf. *Holiness Through Work*, edited by Maria Ferrari.

12. Cf. Ernst Burkhardt – Javier López, Vol. 3, pp. 52–53 (Spanish edition).

homemakers without remuneration, carrying out domestic tasks within their own family environment. Not infrequently, the talents of women were also employed in works of charity and cultural activities, as well as in political and civil rights organizations.

But this view of the role of women in society was changing rapidly. In 1872, the first Spanish woman had enrolled in university classes. By the end of the century, forty-four women were studying at a university. The Royal Order issued on March 16, 1910 opened the doors of the university to all the women who wanted to study there. Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri enrolled in the School of Chemistry at the Central University of Madrid in 1933, with the goal of dedicating herself to research and teaching.

Guadalupe's working life was quite varied. She earned a degree in Chemistry and worked as a teacher in both public and private schools; she directed the domestic work in a university residence in Bilbao; she was the director of Zurbarán,¹³ the first residence for university women organized by Opus Dei in Madrid, while also working in the Regional Advisory.¹⁴ Between 1950-56 she lived in Mexico. There, together with Manolita Ortiz and Esther Cincas she started a university residence named Copenhagen in Mexico City. She promoted educational initiatives for indigenous women and women from rural areas, such as Montefalco.¹⁵ In 1956 she returned to Rome to work in the Central Advisory.¹⁶ Her health problems soon forced her to return to Madrid, where she began working again in research and teaching. Her doctoral thesis, directed by Piedad de la Cierva,¹⁷ was on the topic of "Insulating Refractory

13. Zurbarán Residence is an initiative of the women of Opus Dei. Cf. Mercedes Montero Díaz, "Los comienzos de la labor del Opus Dei con universitarias: la Residencia Zurbarán de Madrid (1947-1950)," in *Studia et Documenta: Rivista dell'Istituto Storico san Josemaría Escrivá*, no. 4, Rome, 2010, pp. 15-44.

14. The Regional Advisory is made up of a group of women who work alongside the Regional Vicar and the Regional Priest Secretary in the organization and government of the formative and apostolic initiatives of Opus Dei in the various regions. A region is a circumscription governed by a Vicar delegated by the Prelate.

15. Lucina Moreno-Valle - Mónica Meza, "Montefalco, 1950: una iniciativa pionera para la promoción de la mujer en el ámbito rural mexicano," in *Studia et Documenta: Rivista dell'Istituto Storico san Josemaría Escrivá*, no. 2, Rome, 2008, pp. 205-229.

16. The Central Advisory is made up of a small group of women who work alongside the Prelate, the Assistant Vicar, the Vicar General, and the Central Priest Secretary in the organization and governance of the formative and apostolic initiatives of Opus Dei. It is located in Rome.

17. Piedad de la Cierva was an outstanding Spanish scientist. After graduating from the University of Valencia in 1932, she completed her doctoral thesis in Madrid at the *Rockefeller Institute*. She won a scholarship for further studies at the *Niels Bohr Institute* in Copenhagen. After the Spanish Civil War she continued her scientific research in fields of study in which she was a pioneer, including optical glass and the manufacture of refractory bricks. She was one of the first women in Opus Dei. Cf. Inmaculada Alva Rodríguez, *Piedad de la Cierva: una sorprendente trayectoria profesional durante la segunda república y el franquismo*, Arbor, 2016.

Properties of Rice Husks,” which she defended in 1965. She received the Juan de la Cierva Research Award for this work, together with Piedad de la Cierva and Antonia Muñoz, in whose research project she had been involved. She also helped begin a School for Domestic Sciences in Madrid.¹⁸

Any reader of this brief overview of her professional career, without any knowledge of the spirituality of Opus Dei, might imagine Guadalupe as a nervous person, a “multitasker” who needed to change her environment frequently, jumping from one job to another. Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri could even give the impression of being a disordered person whose life was subject to dispersion. Nothing could be further from the truth and the reality of her vocation, which consists not in doing, but in being and loving steadily. The spirit of Opus Dei vivified Guadalupe’s life and imbued it with a deep unity, based on the following virtues: availability, service, self-denial, responsibility, industriousness, initiative, broad-mindedness, and sensitivity.

That is to say, we see in Guadalupe a “unity of life,” a consistency that turned every corner of her life into correspondence to God’s love. Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri was not a dispersed, inconstant person, but a soul in love. This view of vocation as a reality that integrates all the dimensions of one’s life and gives them meaning is found at the heart of St. Josemaría’s teachings: “Our calling discloses to us the meaning of our existence. It means being convinced, through faith, of the reason for our life on earth. Our life, the present, past and future, acquires a new dimension, a depth we did not perceive before. All happenings and events now fall within their true perspective: we understand where God is leading us, and we feel ourselves borne along by this task entrusted to us.”¹⁹

The first published biography of Guadalupe was by Mercedes Eguíbar Galarza,²⁰ who later brought out a shorter version.²¹ In booklet format, there is another brief biography by Amparo Catret and Mar Sánchez.²² Cristina Abad²³ and Mercedes Montero²⁴ have authored two recent books about her.

18. The Center for Studies and Research in Domestic Sciences offers quality training to those who would like to make caring for the family their professional work, in the home environment or in communities such as residences, schools, clinics, etc. In 2006, a Peruvian philosopher, M^a Pía Chirinos Montalbetti, published her book *Claves para una antropología del trabajo* [*Keys to an Anthropology of Work*] in which she highlights the importance of domestic work for building strong families. A warm family atmosphere and pleasant home is a source of balance, self-esteem and inner freedom that helps people grow and mature.

19. Saint Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 45.

20. Mercedes Eguíbar Galarza, *Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri. Trabajo, amistad y buen humor*, Rialp, Madrid, 2001.

21. Mercedes Eguíbar Galarza, *Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri*, Palabra, Madrid, 2007.

22. Amparo Catret Mascarell - Mar Sánchez Marchori, *Se llamaba Guadalupe: Una mujer dedicada al servicio de los demás*, Palabra, Madrid, 2002.

23. Cristina Abad Cadenas, 2018, *La libertad de amar*, Palabra, 2018.

Guadalupe appears in the printed edition of the *Diccionario Biográfico Español*, in an entry by Brocos Fernández;²⁵ in *Ecclesia*;²⁶ and in the *Diccionario de San Josemaría*.²⁷ A brief profile is also found in an article by Martín de la Hoz on the causes of canonization of some members of Opus Dei.²⁸

These works are for the most part all based on the same sources: the General Archive of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei (with documentation about and from Guadalupe herself, her brother Eduardo, and her sister-in-law Laura Busca Otaegui); written testimonies for her cause of beatification by those who knew her in Spain, in Mexico and in Rome; interviews conducted by Mercedes Eguibar; memories of her family members and of other people, including Margarita Murillo.²⁹ Other sources include press articles, official bulletins, military and academic documentation in various archives, etc. All these sources for the most part show us Guadalupe “from the outside.” Hence we need to get to know her own interior world better in her published letters to Saint Josemaría, where she opens up her heart to the founder of Opus Dei.

3. *The sanctification of work in Letters to a Saint.*

The General Archives of the Prelature in Rome also preserves the letters Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri wrote to St. Josemaría over the years. María del Rincón and María Teresa Escobar have published excerpts from these 350 letters written between March 19, 1944 and June 22, 1975.³⁰ In them we get to know Guadalupe “from the inside.”³¹ As she tells St. Josemaría: “I’d like to

24. Mercedes Montero Díaz, *En Vanguardia: Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, 1916-1975*, Rialp, Madrid, 2019, 310 pp.

25. José Martín Brocos Fernández, “Ortiz de Landázuri y Fernández de Heredia, María Guadalupe,” in *Diccionario biográfico español*, vol. XXXIX, Real Academia de Historia, pp. 115-116.

26. “Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri,” *Ecclesia*, 2001, vol. LXI, no. 3078, pp. 1838.

27. Mercedes Eguibar Galarza, “Ortiz de Landázuri, Guadalupe,” in José Luis Illanes Maestre (Ed.), *Diccionario de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, Burgos, Monte Carmelo - Instituto Histórico Josemaría Escrivá, 2013, pp. 926-927.

28. José Carlos Martín De La Hoz, “Información sobre las causas de canonización de algunos fieles del Opus Dei,” in *Studia et Documenta: Rivista dell'Istituto Storico san Josemaría Escrivá*, no. 7, Rome, 2013, pp. 433-449.

29. Margarita Murillo Guerrero, *Una nueva partitura. México-Roma (1947-1955)*, Rialp, Madrid, 2001.

30. María del Rincón - María Teresa Escobar, *Letters to a Saint: Letters of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri to St. Josemaría Escrivá*, Scepter. A free eBook edition is available at <https://opusdei.org/en/article/letters-to-a-saint/>.

31. They will be quoted with reference to the book, since it is the original source. The authors, in turn, carefully cite the archival reference of each document.

become more sensitive and faithful every day ... in what everyone can see, which helps others, and in what is only seen by God and my directors and you, because it makes me really happy that they and my Father know me as well as our Lord does.”³²

The arrangement of these notes is chronological, due to the demands of historical methodology, and to show the inner growth of Guadalupe. But before tackling, with delicacy, the intimacy shown in these letters that *were not addressed to us*, we can review some ideas already expressed above. Man and woman, created in the image and likeness of the Triune God, are relational individuals. Any aspect of who we are and what we do can become a liberation from self-absorption and a joyful acceptance of our relational condition. The human meaning of work makes possible the creation of the otherness proper to the common good. The Christian meaning deepens this dimension, since work becomes a matter of sanctification because it puts us in a relationship of communion with God and others. And that relationship implies two profound realities that are combined in the first person singular: love and freedom.

Guadalupe requested admission to Opus Dei on March 19, 1944. At that time she was teaching in two educational centers. Soon after, she began to live in Jorge Manrique, the first women’s center in Madrid. She liked working both as a teacher and a researcher. But soon she realized that in her new supernatural family, her ability to do housework was needed too, the same work that she had seen her mother, Eulogia Fernández de Heredia, carry out at home. Guadalupe left behind her comfort zone to tackle a new task for which she was not particularly gifted. But she saw it as a way to express her freedom by loving and serving. As she told the Father: “Now I’m in charge of the laundry and cleaning, which I’ve never done before. I get a lot of things badly wrong, and I’m so silly that although I’ve got nothing to go on, I lay down the law about things quite offensively, usually without even realizing it. Then afterwards I understand what I’ve done and say I’m sorry.”³³

From Madrid, she went to Bilbao to carry out the same job and direct the domestic administration of a residence for university students: “Father: How happy it makes me to tell you ‘Here I am,’ now at the head of things, and tomorrow in the last place of all, always happy, because I’m serving our Lord.”³⁴ Guadalupe makes clear her eagerness to serve and the joy it gives her. Her new tasks were not simple. She wanted to do things as well as possible but sometimes made mistakes. This is how she expressed it: “I’m still basically disastrous; the other day I was preparing material for making purificators and I drew out

32. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, March 19, 1960*.

33. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, December 31, 1945*.

34. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Bilbao, March 17, 1946*.

the threads all wrong (one of the others managed to put it right, but it was a big nuisance).”³⁵ And she confided: “I sew really badly because I don’t focus my mind on it, and try to get it done too quickly.”³⁶

A short while later, once again back in Madrid and director of the Zurbaran Residence (and also now a member of the Advisory), she opened her heart again to the founder: “I want to spend everything God has given me (health, cheerfulness, etc.) in working very very hard. I only know that wherever you want me to be, I’m ready to obey, think, and work as much as I’m able to.”³⁷ The words “wherever you want me to be” were not a question of arbitrary requests on the founder’s part, but of a triple alignment of wills: God’s, Saint Josemaría’s and her own. Guadalupe was clearly growing in self-knowledge: “I feel that then is precisely when I am truly getting to know myself as our Lord sees me. Father, pray a lot for me, and for all these things – for the residence to be full this year and for the girls to be good ones! ... For the girls we’re doing apostolate with, and who could be holy, to make up their minds!”³⁸

Guadalupe’s joyful dedication to the Residence didn’t mean that she had given up hope of finishing her doctorate in the near future. In the same letter, she also asked the founder to pray “for me to finish my doctorate now, although I’m studying so little!”³⁹ In fact, with all the other work she now had in hand, she would only obtain it twenty years later. Almost a year later, she wrote again: “I’m writing my thesis in my spare moments (I don’t have many), and, God willing, I’ll finish it in October ... I have to go to the laboratory; there are also some girls there to do apostolate with, so I make good use of the short times I’m there. Pray for them.”⁴⁰

Guadalupe never stopped evangelizing, while also trying to improve in her work as director of the Zurbaran Residence: “I think we’re gaining experience in running the residence and many of the difficulties of this past year can be solved satisfactorily. We’re making notes about everything.”⁴¹ She never lost her peace when she didn’t have time for her research, and she enjoyed doing other jobs with the same intention and intensity: “We’ve begun to get the house a bit better organized. I’ve been looking after the [household] adminis-

35. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Bilbao, August 1946*. “Purificators are small linen cloths with which the celebrant at Mass cleans and purifies the chalice.

36. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Bilbao, August 1946*.

37. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, May 17, 1947*.

38. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar. *Madrid, August 31, 1948*.

39. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, August 31, 1948*.

40. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, July 4, 1949*.

41. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, August 18, 1949*.

tration these days. I started doing the cooking and enjoyed myself enormously; it's such a long time since I last did it – in Bilbao in fact. Father, now I'm sure that it doesn't matter to me in the slightest whether I'm the one in charge or obeying and working at whatever job it may be.”⁴²

Guadalupe's sincerity before God led her to face squarely the danger that all the work in her hands could undermine her life of piety: “I missed out some of the norms of piety, what with moving to a different center and doing a different job I lost track of things, but I'm already making resolutions so that it won't happen again”⁴³ A year and a half later, now from Mexico, she showed again her free determination to serve God in her work, family life and apostolate: “I want so much to serve Him! Materially, by working as much as my body is capable of; and spiritually, by giving myself totally and helping my sisters and all the people I do apostolate with, to give their utmost!”⁴⁴

Three years later, three centers of Opus Dei had been opened in Mexico City and one in Monterrey, with the consequent accumulation of work. She told the founder: “We've been through some terrible months because the people in all three houses in Mexico City, plus the one in Monterrey, changed at the same time: it looked like we were crazy! . . . Ever since we had our oratory everything's been going better...”⁴⁵ We also see signs of Guadalupe's growing detachment from all the work she has in her hands (in the good sense of “detachment”), and the clear realization that this work should never become a matter of personal affirmation or a “territorial possession” that makes one indispensable. As Guadalupe wrote: “I'm giving each person their own field of responsibility. I've been left with giving formation to the people of the Work, and the money problems (because there's nobody else who can sort them out for me).”⁴⁶ She freely affirms the abilities of others by giving them responsibilities, while keeping the more difficult or less pleasant work for herself.

She confronted the daily difficulties and challenges with determination, trying to always put others at the center of her concerns: “It's very difficult, after I've been carrying the weight of everything a bit – guidance of the people in the Work, household administration, apostolate etc. – just to eliminate myself. I'm determined to try.”⁴⁷ Her determination not to put herself at the center of things is clear: “Father, I've now been at the head of things for many years; wouldn't it be good for me to start being ‘at the foot’ instead? But you know that here, or

42. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, November 1, 1949.*

43. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, November 1, 1949.*

44. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Mexico City, June 29, 1950.*

45. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Mexico City, July 22, 1953.*

46. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Mexico City, July 22, 1953.*

47. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Cuautla (Mexico), September 14, 1953.*

wherever you put me, I'll be happy serving God in the Work."⁴⁸ Detachment, joy, service, God's will seen in the founder's indications: "Up till now I've prayed for, and tried to achieve, the virtues that are indispensable in the Work (piety, work, cheerfulness, apostolate, spirit of sacrifice, etc.), and that's what I've also prayed for and tried to develop in everyone."⁴⁹

In 1956, Josemaría Escrivá asked Guadalupe to be part of the Central Advisory in Rome. Her way to "be at the foot" was once again to "be at the head." But a serious heart condition, intermittent since adolescence, manifested itself openly in her second year in Rome, and she was forced to return to Madrid to undergo surgery. She overcame the crisis, recovered and returned to teaching and research in Spain, while assuring the founder that she was ready to take on any job he wanted: "I'm feeling very strong, Father, and I think that where I had the operation there won't be any further problems, so lay any burden on me – that's what this donkey is for."⁵⁰

Guadalupe also confided to him that "I love teaching, and it's amazing how much one can do."⁵¹ "Whether it's the philosophy classes, where I'm a student, or the physics and chemistry classes I teach in my job, I enjoy it all very much indeed."⁵² With the mutual trust between them, Guadalupe Ortiz knows that she can express all her professional enthusiasm, because it will not be an impediment for the founder, when the need arises, to ask her to dedicate herself to other tasks. For example, on December 30, 1964, she wrote: "If things go on as they should I will soon defend my thesis (my supervisor is Piedad de la Cierva) ... We've worked very hard on it. If they announce a competitive examination for Work Training at the place where I'm teaching at the moment, I'll apply for it, and I'm equally ready to drop it all whenever I'm asked to."⁵³ The professional advances that she describes are linked to the faces of specific people she can help to grow in their Christian life: "I'm thrilled at all the apostolate there is to be done there – they have about 1,000 girls and women between 12 and 20 or older, and there are still some subjects that haven't started up yet."⁵⁴

Any job done out of love for God, freely and to the best of one's ability, leads to holiness. Once again she gives St. Josemaría a brief summary of her life: "I work, do apostolate, and pray as well as I can. I want to do it better,

48. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Mexico City, December 12, 1955.*

49. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Mexico City, March 19, 1956.*

50. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, May 28, 1959.*

51. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, October 1, 1962.*

52. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, February 14, 1963.*

53. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, December 30, 1964.*

54. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, December 30, 1964.*

and if you remember to pray for me, perhaps I'll manage."⁵⁵ The day she defended her thesis, she wrote: "Father, these pages contain the result of many hours' work. It's just been awarded 'cum laude' and I want to place it in your hands straight away, with everything I am and have, to be useful."⁵⁶ Two years later, she recounts in a long letter that she has passed her Professional Education exams, which will allow her to stay in Madrid and teach at an institute for women there. And she adds: "I just want to tell you that, as with everything else, this new step in my professional work is in your hands. (Nothing ties me down, thank God)."⁵⁷

Guadalupe was not a person self-absorbed in her work, quite the contrary: "Father, I'm really keen to serve now in this new job: the Faculty of Domestic Sciences ... I've been teaching both groups, and I put everything I could into my teaching. It's a new joy that I have to thank God and you for – that my profession could be useful for something we love so much in the Work: household administration."⁵⁸ And she writes in a later letter: "I'm happy, I pray, I do apostolate with quite a lot of people, and I study as well as teach."⁵⁹ Two years later she once again speaks about her personal and professional goals: "In the coming academic year I want to concern myself thoroughly with my sisters, the apostolate and the house. At work I also have several goals: to take another step towards a professorship in Official Professional Teaching, and the possibility of a research award by publication of a book on textiles... all focused on domestic science."⁶⁰

In 1974, after obtaining a state teaching position through a competitive examination, the faculty senate voted to name her director of the Institute. She explained to the founder why she turned down the appointment: "I honestly wasn't expecting it; in fact I thought that I didn't fit in and that my overall influence was nil. I was extremely sorry to be obliged to turn down the offer. I could have done such splendid apostolate (over 1,000 women students between 15 and 25). If only it had happened a few years ago! Now I'm not up to it physically."⁶¹ Guadalupe, who gave up many professional opportunities to dedicate herself to her family of Opus Dei, now realized she didn't have the strength needed to take on this new position. As always, her first concern was for souls: "I could have done such splendid apostolate" with over a thousand students. "Pray a lot, Father, for me and this house, for all of us ... to give our

55. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, March 19, 1963*.

56. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, July 8, 1965*.

57. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *La Pililla (Avila), February 6, 1967*.

58. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Los Rosales (Madrid), January 9, 1969*.

59. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, March 1971*.

60. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *La Pililla (Avila), September 4, 1973*.

61. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, January 13, 1974*.

utmost, not to be ungenerous in anything, and for me to be able to take the lead and help them. I want to pray for all the intentions that you are concerned about: the Church, her teachings, priests; and to do it well, by being cheerful and helping others by my good example.”⁶²

Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri sanctified her final illness with this same spirit. She tried to keep working to the extent that she could (in some of her hospital stays, she tested chemical stains on textiles in the sink in her room), to pray, and to offer her life for the salvation of all men and women.

4. *Conclusions.*

What can the beatification of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri offer to the men and women of good will and intellectual honesty today, no matter what their job and religious beliefs? We live in a confusing time, which tries to fetter real life with ideological constructs. Post-modernism, post-truth and transhumanism are theoretically its great achievements, but these ideologies are closed systems that often fail to connect with the real world. But the Truth doesn't change, since it is immutable. And even if no one were to recognize it now—which is not the case—it would still offer itself to all men and women in the being of things, accessible to all who seek it. Guadalupe was a great lover of God, and therefore of the Truth, of the Truth that she sought in her professional work and that made her free and “blessed” in the end, with a happiness that, as the Church has now declared, she can never lose.

At the beginning of this article I pointed out how Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, with the great variety of jobs she took on, could seem to be someone with a “scattered” soul. Nothing could be further from the truth, or from the unifying reality of the Christian vocation, which does not consist in doing, but in being and loving, also in one's work. Guadalupe was not a dispersed soul but a soul in love, with a great love for God and for all men and women. That is why she was beatified last May 18 in Madrid. And that is why it is easy to recognize her in these words of Saint John Paul II's *Letter to Women*: “Thank you, *women who work!* You are present and active in every area of life – social, economic, cultural, artistic and political. In this way you make an indispensable contribution to the growth of a culture which unites reason and feeling, to a model of life ever open to the sense of ‘mystery,’ to the establishment of economic and political structures ever more worthy of humanity.”⁶³

62. María del Rincón – María Teresa Escobar, *Madrid, January 13, 1974*.

63. St. John Paul II, “Letter to Women,” June 29, 1995.