

**VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD  
GUADALUPE ORTIZ DE LANDÁZURI**

**PRESS DOSSIER**

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**Further information:**

Opus Dei Press Office  
Via dei Farnesi 91/A – 00186 ROMA  
Tel: +39 066867522  
Email: [international@opusdei.org](mailto:international@opusdei.org)  
[www.opusdei.org](http://www.opusdei.org)

## **1. Brief biography of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri (1916-1975)**

Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri was born in Madrid, Spain, on December 12, 1916. She was the fourth child and only daughter of Manuel Ortiz de Landázuri and Eulogia Fernández-Heredia. Her parents raised her in the Christian faith. When she was a child, her older brother Francisco passed away. When Guadalupe was 10 years old, she and the family moved to Tetouan, North Africa, because of the work of her father, who was in the military. During her childhood, two defining features of her personality already stood out: courage and boldness.

In 1932 the family returned to Madrid, where she graduated from high school at the Instituto Miguel de Cervantes. In 1933 she enrolled as a chemistry student at Universidad Central. She was one of only five women in a class of 70. Later, she began her doctorate, because she wanted to dedicate herself to university teaching. Her university colleagues remembered her as a serious student, but friendly, with a sense of adventure.

During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), her father was taken prisoner and condemned to be shot. Guadalupe, who was then 20 years old, joined her brother Eduardo and their mother, as they said their final goodbyes to her father hours before his death, helping him remain serene at that painful time. She sincerely forgave those who had decided to condemn her father. In 1937 she was able to move with her brother and mother to the other zone of Civil War Spain, where her brother Manolo also resided. They settled in Valladolid until the end of the war.

They returned to Madrid in 1939. Guadalupe began to teach in the school of the Blessed Virgin Mary and in the French Lyceum. One Sunday in 1944, while she attended Mass, she felt "touched" by the grace of God. Upon returning home, she met a friend and expressed a desire to speak with a priest. The friend provided Josemaría Escrivá's telephone number. On January 25 Guadalupe went to an appointment with Father Escrivá at a location which was the first women's center of Opus Dei, in Jorge Manrique Street. Guadalupe remembered that encounter as her discovery of the call of Jesus Christ to love him above all things through professional work and ordinary life. This was the message that God wanted to bring to men and women through Opus Dei. After considering the matter in prayer, and after spending a few days on a spiritual retreat, on March 19 Guadalupe decided to answer "yes" to the Lord. Guadalupe was 27 years old. From that moment on she intensified her dealings with God. She fulfilled with love her daily tasks, and sought to spend time before the tabernacle.

Opus Dei was in its early years and, among the tasks that had to be carried out, it was important to attend to the domestic administration of student residences that were being set up in Madrid and in Bilbao. Guadalupe dedicated herself to this work for a few years. They were years of scarcity and ration cards. In addition to these external difficulties, there was also the effort to learn a job for which she had no special ability. That did not diminish her passion for chemistry and, whenever she could, she continued to study it.

During the academic year 1947-1948 she was the director of the university residence Zurbarán. She made friends easily with the university students, who appreciated her patience and affection, as well as the sense of humor with which she helped them in their academic and personal lives.

On March 5, 1950, at the invitation of Saint Josemaría, she went to Mexico to take the message of Opus Dei to that country. She was very excited about the work that would be done in that country, under the protection of the Virgin of Guadalupe. She enrolled in a doctoral program in chemical sciences, which she had begun in Spain. With those who accompanied her, she set up a university residence. She encouraged the residents to take their studies seriously, and she raised their sights to the ideal of service to the Church and to the society of which they were a part. She emphasized concern for the poor and the elderly. Among other initiatives, she created a mobile clinic with a friend who was a doctor. They went house to house in the poorest neighborhoods, providing medical tests to the people who lived there and giving them free medicines. She promoted the cultural and professional formation of the peasants who lived in mountainous and isolated areas of the country and who often did not have the most basic education.

Guadalupe had a big heart and a strong character, which she tried to temper by making an effort to deal with others in a refined and considerate manner. Her Christian optimism and her habitual smile were very attractive, and she often expressed her joy in song, even though she was not particularly good at singing. Beatriz Gaytan, a historian, says that "whenever I think of her, despite the time that has elapsed, what I hear is her laugh. Guadalupe had a permanent smile. She was welcoming, affable, straightforward." During the years she spent in Mexico she was one of the main people involved in setting up Montefalco, a former colonial hacienda which was then in ruins and which today has been converted into a conference center and retreat house, and the venue for two educational institutions: Montefalco School and the rural college El Peñón.

In 1956 she moved to Rome to work more closely with St Josemaría in the government of Opus Dei. That year she noticed the first symptoms of a heart condition and she needed to have an operation in Madrid. Despite a good recovery, her heart condition worsened and she returned to live in Spain for good. She took up again her academic work and started a research project on insulating refracting materials and the value of ash from rice husks for that use. She won the prize Juan de la Cierva for her research work and she completed and defended her doctoral thesis on July 8, 1965. At the same time she also worked as a Chemistry teacher at the Ramiro de Maeztu Institute for two years, and at the Women's School for Industrial Studies (where she became the Deputy Head) for the following ten years. From 1968 she took part in the planning and setting up of the Center of Studies and Research of Domestic Sciences, in which she was the Deputy Head and Chemistry teacher. Those who worked with her remember that she was more understanding than demanding with people, and that one could see that she sought to be with God throughout the day. She knew herself looked upon lovingly by God and Our Lady, and whenever she could she would make a brief visit to the Blessed Sacrament, to talk with Jesus one to one. She often thought of her students

when preparing her classes, which she tried to do as well as she could. She had many friends, and dedicated a lot of time and energy to them, without forgetting those who lived with her, whom she looked after with great affection.

Despite her heart condition, Guadalupe did not complain and tried not to concern herself with the tiredness from walking, climbing stairs, etc. She endeavored to listen with interest to others and wanted to pass unnoticed, seeking to focus the conversation on others. In 1975 doctors decided that the best option would be to operate, and Guadalupe left her home in Madrid to enter the Clínica Universidad de Navarra. The doctors operated on her on July 1. A few days earlier, on 26 June, the founder of Opus Dei had died in Rome. Guadalupe received the news with great pain but with the peace and joy of knowing that he was happy in the presence of God. A few days later Guadalupe would face her own death with that same serenity: although the result of the operation was satisfactory, when she was recovering, she suffered a sudden respiratory failure. She died on July 16, 1975, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. She is buried in the cemetery of Pamplona.

On November 18, 2001, Cardinal Antonio María Rouco Varela, archbishop of Madrid, responding to the fame of sanctity of Guadalupe, reflected in numerous testimonies and favors received through her intercession, presided over the opening of her process of canonization. The instructional phase was completed on 18 March 2005.

## **2. Chronology of the cause of canonization**

**16 July 1975:** Guadalupe dies in Pamplona, Spain, with a reputation of holiness.

**6 January 2001:** The Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarría, appoints Fr. Benito Badrinas Amat as postulator for the cause of beatification and canonization of Guadalupe.

**30 March 2001:** The Congregation for the Causes of Saints—after receiving the petition of the Archbishop of Madrid, Cardinal Antonio María Rouco Varela, and with the consent of Archbishop Fernando Sebastián of Pamplona—transfers the authority to carry out the diocesan investigative phase of the Cause from Pamplona to Madrid.

**3 November 2001:** The Congregation for the Causes of Saints grants the *nihil obstat* to start Guadalupe's canonization process.

**18 November 2001:** First session of the process on the life, virtues and reputation for sanctity of Guadalupe in the Archdiocese of Madrid, presided by Cardinal Rouco Varela.

**23 January 2002 to 11 December 2003:** In 66 sessions, the tribunal interviews 32 witnesses, in Madrid.

**6 to 28 May 2003:** In 37 sessions, the tribunal hears the testimonies of 22 witnesses in Mexico City, to verify *in situ* the extent of the reputation for sanctity of Guadalupe.

**9 May 2002 to 13 December 2004:** The members of the Historical Commission gather all the relevant documents on the Servant of God, submit them and make a report on the same.

**10 May 2002 to 3 January 2005:** The theological experts study the writings of Guadalupe and present their opinions.

**18 March 2005:** Closing session of the diocesan process, presided by the Archbishop of Madrid.

**23 April 2005:** Submission of the conclusions of the diocesan investigative phase to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, consisting of 3008 pages in seven volumes.

**12 May 2005:** The Prelate of Opus Dei appoints Fr. Antonio Rodríguez de Rivera as postulator for the Cause of Canonization before the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

**17 February 2006:** The Congregation for the Causes of Saints issues the decree validating the diocesan process on the life, virtues and reputation for sanctity of the Servant of God.

**5 May 2006:** The Congregation appoints Father Cristoforo Bove, O.F.M. Conv., as chief relator to direct the drafting of the *Positio super vita, virtutibus et fama sanctitatis* of Guadalupe.

**4 August 2009:** The postulator submits the *Positio* to the Congregation. It has four parts: History of the Cause and Sources (25 pages); Documented biography (159 pages); Critical Study on the Virtues (215 pages); and Summary of the witnesses' declarations, and the documents and writings of Guadalupe (656 pages).

**7 June 2016:** The theological consultants of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, after having examined the *Positio*, give a positive reply to the question regarding the practice of heroic virtues on the part of Guadalupe, and her reputation for sanctity and favors reported.

**2 May 2017:** The ordinary session of the Cardinal and Bishop members of the Congregation give their positive vote on the heroic virtues and reputation for sanctity of Guadalupe.

**4 May 2017:** Pope Francis authorizes the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate the decree on the virtues of the Servant of God Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri.

### **3. Questions put to the postulator of the Cause, Fr. Antonio Rodriguez de Rivera**

#### **1. Who was Guadalupe Ortiz de Landazuri?**

She was a woman of outstanding human qualities, cheerful and humble. She had great professional prestige and always led a life of helping others in their spiritual and material needs. She was a person in love with God, full of faith and hope.

She was born in Madrid, Spain, on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, 1916. She studied Chemistry in Madrid's Central University. In her class, there were only five women. She stood out for seriousness in her studies and a ready smile. After the Spanish Civil War, she graduated and began to teach Physics and Chemistry in the "Colegio de las Irlandesas" (Loreto Nuns High School) and in the Lycee Francaise (French State High School) in Madrid.

Early in 1944 she became acquainted with Opus Dei. Her first encounter with Saint Josemaría affected her deeply. Later she would say: "I had the very clear idea that God was speaking to me through that priest". In that same year she asked for admission in that institution of the Church. She directed some centers of Opus Dei in Madrid and Bilbao. In 1950 she moved to Mexico in order to start apostolic work with women there: it was a great adventurous activity, lived with generosity and enormous faith. Among other things, she started a center for human and professional development of country women in a rural part of Morelos State.

In 1956 she took up residence in Rome, Italy. There she collaborated with Saint Josemaría in the internal government of Opus Dei. After two years she returned to Spain for health reasons where she re-engaged in teaching and research. She finished her doctoral thesis with the maximum grade and was awarded the Juan de la Cierva Prize. She was a pioneer of the "Centro de Estudios e Investigacion de Ciencias Domesticas" (CEICID) (Center for Studies and Research in Domestic Sciences). Later she was awarded the medal of the "Comite Intenational de la Rayonne et des Fibres Synthetique" for a research study of hers on textile fibers.

Following a heart ailment, she died in Pamplona, already with a reputation for holiness, on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16th, 1975, just 20 days after Saint Josemaría's going to heaven. She was 59 years of age.

#### **2. Why did the Church decide to open her cause for canonization?**

Because those who knew her in Spain, in Mexico and in Italy, are convinced of her holiness, that is, of the exemplary character of her Christian conduct. Many others who after her death, have heard of her heroic life, have recourse to her intercession before God to ask favors of God. What do those people who knew her, say? Here are some quotes:

- "We considered her to be an extraordinary person who stood out because of her virtues". "She left behind an unforgettable memory of holiness"

- "It was obvious that she was a daughter of God, who wished to be faithful to His will"
- "One could see she was in love with Our Lord, being full of a profound joy, which simply on getting to know her, was passed on to you".
- "She had an overflowing joy, habitually; just by laughing she passed on a part of Heaven to you".
- " I was struck by how she gathered herself together when hearing Mass and receiving Communion every day, by how much she prayed and encouraged us to pray"
- "Her great love for the Church brought her to pray for the Holy Father every day".
- She worked "united to Our Lord, trying to love and help whoever were around her and she had an apostolic drive which not even her illness managed to diminish".
- "I desire her canonization because I consider her a saint and I believe that her life is an important example in today's world".

### **3. What does this step signify, that the Church has declared Guadalupe to be "venerable"?**

With this step the Church is declaring that Guadalupe lived the virtues to a heroic degree, especially that of charity, and that therefore she is being put forward as an example of a Christian woman who has sanctified herself in ordinary life. This declaration is the result of a long study of abundant material assembled by the Madrid Tribunal in a diocesan procedure: that is, the testimonies of 54 witnesses –men and women from several countries-, numerous written testimonies and many other documents. These juridical proofs have been evaluated in detail firstly by theologian consultants and later by the cardinals and bishops of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. All have arrived at the conclusion that Guadalupe responded to divine grace in an extraordinary manner. Afterwards, Pope Francis ratified the opinion of the Congregation and has declared the heroism of the virtues and fame of holiness of Guadalupe.

### **4. You have studied her life in depth. Personally, what impressed you most about Guadalupe?**

What has most impressed me has been Guadalupe's "forgetfulness of herself". She thought constantly of God and of other people. An example of this is what happened in Mexico in 1952. It was during a retreat for university students, in a recently constructed building, still almost without any furniture. On the second-last day, she gave a talk on the Christian virtues. She, as well as the others, was sitting on the bare floor. She felt a sharp pain from the sting from a poisonous insect, but did not want to interrupt the talk until the end, so as not to worry the participants, and none of them realized what had happened. She got sick with a high fever and had to remain in bed for two weeks. At no stage did she complain. Moreover, from her bed she continued

performing her various duties until another Opus Dei woman substituted for her. Those who attended her were witnesses: not once did she complain or speak about her illness, but rather took an interest in those who came to visit her and kept encouraging the apostolate.

### **5. What features would you emphasize in Guadalupe's character?**

Many people who knew her underline her overflowing cheerfulness, her habitual smile. She was welcoming to everybody. She transmitted peace and confidence to countrywomen and university students, to women of any social standing. Her joy was not the result of some human effort, but rather the consequence of her knowing that she was a daughter of God, of her closeness to Christ; that is, a gift of the Holy Spirit. As a consequence she was constant and serene. This helped her a lot in her apostolate and her service to the Church and to society.

A young college woman, who met Guadalupe a year after her arrival in Mexico, has remarked: "I must admit I was very curious to meet her, because they all told me about Guadalupe's laugh and about her constant cheerfulness". Guadalupe's own brother Eduardo, describing her last moments, has written: "This was Guadalupe's great "secret": to always accept as good whatever happened to her. Around her, in those last hours of mortal anguish, all were lost in admiration: that same unforgettable smile"

### **6. If her life was relatively normal, why do you think that she can be a good model for others?**

Precisely for that very reason: because her life was normal and at the same time filled with God, it is a good model for all Christians, particularly for those who are called to sanctify the ordinary circumstances of their life in the middle of the world. In present-day society where there are some who wish to impose an ego-centrism and self-referential relativism, Guadalupe's life is a splendid invitation to open oneself out to others. Her example can encourage anyone to get over their love of comfort and to give oneself over to service of others. In a pessimistic environment, Guadalupe's optimism helps others to smile. And in a society which seems to be fleeing from God, Guadalupe's story helps one to discover that it is only with Christ that one can have a cheerfulness which is both deep and lasting.

### **7. What are the subsequent steps necessary for the beatification and canonization of Guadalupe?**

The declaration on the heroic virtues is the conclusion of a critical study of Guadalupe's life which is deep and carried out in the light of the Faith. Following this step, for beatification and canonization the Church asks for something that man cannot provide. Only God can work a miracle, granted through the intercession of Guadalupe, which would open up the path to beatification. And again, only God can work a second miracle, after the

beatification, which would open the door for her canonization. We trust that the first door will be opened soon.

#### **8. Is there popular devotion already? What things are people asking of Guadalupe Ortiz de Landazuri?**

Private devotion to Guadalupe is spreading out more and more. Many people are writing to the postulators office to report graces which God has granted them after invoking Guadalupe. In the last 10 years we have received accounts of favors received from Spain, Mexico, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Lithuania, Kenya, India, Venezuela, Ecuador, Guatemala, Porto Rico, United States and Canada.

Another notable sign of her reputation for holiness is that in Zamora, in the state of Michoacan, Mexico, a primary school has been named "Colegio Guadalupe de Ortiz de Landázuri". This initiative was promoted by some readers of her biography who were impressed by her holiness, her professionalism and her dedication to education and the formation of young people.

People going to her intercession have received different types of graces: cures, favors related to pregnancy and childbirth, getting employment, resolving conflicts between work and family obligations, resolution of money problems, family reconciliations, helping friends and colleagues to get close to God.

Soon the Congregation for the Causes of Saints will take up the study of the documentation of an extraordinary event attributed to Guadalupe. It concerns the curing of a basocellular carcinoma over the course of the night of the 28-29th of November, 2002. The man who was suffering the cancer, located in his right eye, invoked Guadalupe with intense faith before going to bed and on getting up the following day, discovered that he was cured. The lesion had completely disappeared without leaving any trace. The medical experts in the Congregation will have to judge if this fact has, or does not have, a medical explanation. Afterwards, firstly the theologians and then later, the cardinals and bishops will evaluate if it can be attributed to Guadalupe.

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### ***DVD Documentary Video***

- Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri, Vídeo, 2005, 36 min. Available at Beta Films Foundation (<http://www.betafilms.org>).

Watch the video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gt2FewGERG8>

### ***Photographs***

- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/opus-dei/sets/72157651819107319>

### ***Online site***

- <http://guadalupeortizdelandazuri.org/>

There are 14 Newsletters on the Servant of God Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri that have been published by the Office for the Causes of Saints of the Prelature of Opus Dei in Spain.