



Archdiocese of San Antonio

Most Reverend Gustavo Garcia-Siller



Seton Home Gala Remarks

March 5, 2016

Today, we join The Tobit Ministry in carrying out one of the most loving corporal works of mercy...."To bury the dead." The evidence that we perform this act of charity and mercy is all around us, in this beautiful place, and in cemeteries throughout the city. I like to call cemeteries "Gardens of Love", because they represent both the sense of loss and the deep affection we hold in our hearts for those loved ones who have gone to the Lord before us. Generally we think of this as an act of love and respect, but hardly an act of mercy, for we simply can't help ourselves, but to maintain this unbreakable bond with those we love.

Sadly, though, there are those who are poor and homeless among us, who suffer the silence and invisibility of passive indifference as they endlessly walk the streets of our city, sleeping on park benches or feeling the hard cold pavement penetrating their very souls. When they die, too often there is no one to mourn, no one to commit them with love to the Lord, and no place marked as a reminder that they

were indeed children of God; someone's son or daughter...or even their mother or father.

In our Gospel Jesus teaches us, "Whatever you did for these least brothers of mine, you did for me." Today we are following the example set by Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, who likely heard these words of salvation many times. Jesus himself was homeless, he had no place to lay his head; no place to call his own and no tomb in which he could be laid to rest. Yet Joseph washed and anointed Jesus, and wrapped His body in burial cloths and placed him in his own tomb.

Today, we do the same for our brothers Unisolo Olivan and Dennis Washington in this sacred space, in the Tobit Garden. Today, we proclaim that Unisolo and Dennis are no longer homeless, they have an address, here and we pray for eternity in heaven. "Poverty, loneliness, pain and hunger are behind them and God is before them." As St. Paul writes, "Where O death, is your victory? Where O death, is your sting?" Faith overcomes death and love defeats eternal darkness.

In faith, each of us are called to reach out in prayer to the humblest among us...even to death. Pope Francis reminds us; "In prayer, there are no rich and poor people, there are sons and daughters, sisters and brothers. In prayer, there is no first or second class, there is brotherhood. It is in prayer that our hearts find the strength not to be

cold and insensitive in the face of injustice." Today, what we do for Dennis and Unisolo is truly an act of faith and a prayerful expression of our love and God's mercy. May their souls and the souls of all the faithfully departed rest in peace.