



Archdiocese of San Antonio

Most Reverend Gustavo García-Siller



Homily – Sisters of Sacred Heart

April 24, 2016

Two hundred years may seem like a long time, and much has changed in the last two centuries. In 1816 James Monroe was elected President of the United States. Pope Pius VII, a Benedictine, condemned the slave trade. El Santuario de Chimayó was established in New Mexico. And the Sisters of the Sacred Heart were founded. A long time ago – a reason for celebration!

In the history of our salvation, however, two hundred years does not seem such a long time. Some truths are eternal. The death and resurrection of Jesus was the turning point, and each year the Church celebrates the new life that we have in the risen Lord – even as we look forward to a “new heaven and a new earth.” While our eyes are fixed on the future, we are also to enjoy our life in Christ here and now. And so, we gather to give thanks for two centuries of God’s blessings upon and through the Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles we encounter Paul and Barnabas proclaiming the good news of the gospel far and wide. New converts were entering the community of faith. The Holy Spirit was at work in the Gentile world also. What united the diverse communities, beginning in Jerusalem and Galilee and spreading throughout the Mediterranean region, was the firm belief in the risen Lord and the proclamation of his gospel.

In today's gospel we are at the very heart of the good news. The setting is the Last Supper. Jesus calls his disciples to love one another "as I have loved you" – holding nothing back, faithful, true, beyond our imagination – full of mystery. St. John tells us that God is love. St. Paul wrote a beautiful description of what love entails, and, recently, Pope Francis has offered us an excellent commentary on Paul's insights in Chapter Four of the Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*. Although the Holy Father is primarily writing about love in marriage and family, his reflections are grounded in a profound understanding of the human condition. I highly recommend that you read the entire Apostolic Exhortation, paying special attention to the fourth chapter. There is enough material there for meditation for years to come – for married couples, for religious, for priests and bishops!

**May Our Lady of Guadalupe, who promised to be with us
always, teach us the way of authentic Christian love.**