



Archdiocese of San Antonio

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Homily – Jubilee Day for Clergy

June 7, 2016

“Lord, let your face shine on us.” This is our response after listening attentively to God’s word. “Lord, let your face shine on us.” In every circumstance -- in times of trials and difficulties – in times of new opportunities and carrying out our daily priestly ministry. Lord, turn toward us. Allow us to walk in your light. Show us a Father’s compassionate and merciful love.

Elijah had a very difficult mission. He was proclaiming fidelity to God among a people who had strayed far from the God of Israel. The king and queen, the many prophets of Baal, and the people had turned against him. Elijah predicted a famine in the land, and the rains stopped. Vegetation withered. It also affected God’s own prophet. The brook near where he was hiding and getting His source of life-giving water dried up!

God reassures him that a poor, desperate person would help to keep him alive – the widow of Zarephath. She was about to prepare a last meal for her son and herself. God’s face shined upon all three, and

they survived with a meager measure of nourishment. God did not abandon them, and God will never abandon us.

That is why we are celebrating a Jubilee Year of Mercy. As Pope Francis reminds us often: we are sinners who need God's healing touch, his forgiveness, his mercy and compassion. At this year's Chrism Mass, the Holy Father said: "If [Christ] breaks down walls and challenges our sense of security, he does this to open the flood gates of that mercy which, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, he wants to pour out upon our world."

Last week as part of a special Jubilee of Mercy for Priests, Pope Francis called upon priests to contemplate two hearts – the Heart of the Good Shepherd and our own heart as priests. He said that Jesus' days "were divided between prayer to the Father and encountering people." "The heart of the priest is a heart pierced by the love of the Lord... It is a heart rooted firmly in the Lord, warmed by the Holy Spirit, open and available to our brothers and sisters." He said this means being a shepherd, not an inspector -- a shepherd not a boss feared by his flock, a Good shepherd full of joy.

"Lord, let your face shine upon us," we pray. The Lord answers: "You are the light of the world!. . . your light must shine before others so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."