



# **Archdiocese of San Antonio**

## **Most Reverend Gustavo García-Siller**



### **Homily - Jubilee Mass for Deacons and Spouses**

#### **June 26, 2016**

Today's readings present us with lessons of commitment and freedom. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, knowing full well he would suffer and die there. He was resolute in his mission. This is what the Father had sent him to do. This is where the hope for salvation and eternal life for all mankind would be fulfilled. Nothing would deter him. This was the moment he was born for and he would fulfill the promise that had been handed down from the Father and through the prophets since the fall of Adam and Eve.

As Jesus continues on his journey to the cross, he encounters three men who hear Jesus' invitation to discipleship. All three say they want to follow, but Jesus explains the price of discipleship to each of them. His responses may seem stark and out of character for the Jesus we have met throughout the gospels. In each case, Jesus is inviting them to follow Him and serve God's people. Therefore, we must not be put off our complete and faithful "Yes". Jesus could see through their delay tactics and excuses. When Jesus says, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom;" He is

telling us that we must not let ourselves to be distracted from our calling to discipleship. His words are not intended to ignore responsibilities to our loved ones, but that we should avoid excuses that delay or divert our purpose on our path of our vocation.

Speaking to Deacons from around the world, Pope Francis encourages you to serve with a generous and merciful heart, “Dear deacons, if you show that you are available to others, your ministry will not be self-serving, but evangelical.” It sometimes seems that your time is not your own as you are present to your parishioners at important, joyful, and sad times in their lives. That’s OK! When you give the gift of your time, compassion and mercy without reservation or delay, you are following Jesus’ example as a servant, and your ministry is transformed into a beautiful prayer.

You loving wives of our deacons also live a life of unselfish service as you support and inspire your husbands in their vocation. It isn’t always easy, it often disrupts family plans, but with you obediently and faithfully encouraging his call to service you too are a missionary of mercy. I thank you for the love you also show for the people of God. In St. Paul’s letter to the Galatians he writes; “For you were called for freedom, brothers and sisters...” In Christ, we are no longer slaves but we are friends who are free to serve and sacrifice in the spirit of love. It is the Holy Spirit who leads us to embracing fully and without delay our response to Jesus’ invitation to serve. On the day of your ordination,

you said, “Yes”, but each day brings a new challenge, a new invitation, a new opportunity to show that you are freed to be a listening ear, a patient servant, and a loving heart, renewing your “Yes” every day. In this year dedicated to God’s mercy, the Holy Father tells us that if you are “...meek of heart and in constant dialogue with Jesus, you will not be afraid to be servants of Christ, and to encounter and caress the flesh of the Lord in the poor of our time.”