



Archdiocese of San Antonio
Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller



Centennial Mass for Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart
of Jesus
January 18, 2014

What a joy it is to be in the heart of Jesus! And what a joy it is to celebrate this wonderful devotion with you, our Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus as you come to your Centennial! The heart of our Lord stands as our example, and as our inspiration as we seek to do his will.

This is a celebration not just of years, but of countless moments of grace that have been given to the Church by the faithful ministry you dear sisters have carried out. We celebrate your faithful yes to the will of God, and to the mission He has entrusted to you as your gift to the world. How appropriate is it then, that today's readings remind us of the calling of two other servants of God.

The calling of Saul, son of Kish, starts in a very simple and innocent way. Kish sends his son Saul out to find some of their animals who have wandered off. Saul shows his devotion in this simple matter by literally going the extra mile to find his father's lost creatures. He continues to search, again and again, going further and further, in faithfulness to what he had been asked to do. While this effort does not lead to him finding the animals, it does lead him to the place where the Prophet Samuel is. Those extra miles got Saul to where God wanted him to be. Samuel sees the young man and is told by the Lord that he is to be the king. Saul had gone out trying his hardest to be a faithful child of God, and hears his call to the vocation God had planned for him.

The Gospel of Mark offers us the story of different kind of call today. As Jesus passes a customs post, he sees Levi, the tax-collector sitting there. Our Lord sees the light of grace in Levi's heart, a light not seen by others, and maybe not even seen by Levi himself. Tax-collectors were notorious for corruption in those days. They were despised as sinners because of their tendency to take more than they were supposed to from the people. But our Lord looks beyond our failings and calls us to be something more; he calls us to himself. Not only did Jesus eat with tax-collectors, but in Levi he called one of them to be one of his Apostles.

This brings us to the calling we are here to celebrate today. When Mother Maria Teresa of St. Joseph heard her calling from the Lord to found a community to prayerfully care for poor children, for the neglected, the immigrant, and the ignored of our society, she answered with faith and courage. And to think this would not have happened if she would not have followed the draw of God to come into the Catholic Church, of if she would not have found the resolve to put aside the comfort of her wealth and to live poor for the poor. It is a joy to see the inspiration and the fruit of her going the extra mile and of her putting aside her worldliness blossoming in the ministry of her sisters throughout the life of the community. You are a family of women who have opened your hearts to the calling of the Divine Heart of Jesus, and for this we thank you.

We remember, too, the calling we share as people of God, called by the anointing we have received, like the anointing of King Saul, to carry out the saving mission of God together. There are so many in the world waiting to encounter the loving grace of the Divine Physician, may we recommit ourselves during this holy Mass to that noble calling that we received through our baptism.

May Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Joseph, and Blessed Maria Teresa aid us by their prayers as we celebrate the life of the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart Jesus, and as we lift our hearts to our Lord's as we are gathered around His altar. May their intercession help us to draw ever closer to the one who has called us, and may we always answer with courage and love.

