



Archdiocese of San Antonio
Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller



Homily for Religious Jubilarians Mass May 27, 2014

The Psalmist prays: “I thank you, LORD, with all my heart.” My dear Sisters and Brothers, that is my prayer today: I thank you, Lord, with all my heart...for the religious women and men who have served the Church so faithfully for many, many years ... touching countless lives with God’s mercy and love ... here in the Archdiocese!” I am sure that you also echo other words of the Psalm in your lives: “The Lord is with me to the end. Lord, your love endures forever.”

Jubilees are a time for looking back, for remembering how God has guided our lives to this moment. Pope Francis recently reminded a group of religious: “It is Christ who called you to follow him in the consecrated life.” While you have said yes to God’s call, it was Christ himself who called you to consecrated life.

Anniversaries are also a time of celebration for God’s mercy and love, which we do as a community of faith gathered around the altar today -- not only to celebrate the ecstasies, but also the agonies – not only the triumphs but also the disappointments – not only happy

moments but also trying times when we were discouraged and God

was there to comfort, challenge, and allow us to persevere.

In today’s first reading Paul and Silas are in prison in Philippi. While they recover from their beating, they are praying and singing psalms to God – and suddenly they are freed by God’s dramatic action. Their jailer is baptized and takes care of them in his own home. This story is probably much more dramatic than any of our lives. But

underlying the narrative is the Lord's loving concern for his disciples – something we celebrate in our own lives today.

Jubilees are also a time for looking ahead and renewing our commitment to the Lord. The Holy Father said this means to continuously move out from ourselves in order to “center our lives on Christ and on his Gospel, on the will of God. It means continuing our journey of adoring the Lord and of serving him in our brothers and sisters. . . To adore and to serve: two attitudes that cannot be separated, but must always go hand in hand.”

As we face the future, we listen attentively to Jesus' words to his disciples at the Last Supper: “If I go, I will send the Advocate to you,” the Holy Spirit. In a daily Mass at the Vatican last week the Holy Father said that “those who welcome the Holy Spirit will have a solid and endless peace, unlike those who choose to ‘superficially’ trust in the tranquility offered by money or power. . . the peace of Jesus is a Person, the Holy Spirit.” He pointed out that we receive this peace at Baptism and Confirmation. We received it like a child who receives a wonderful gift – without conditions, with an open heart. Pope Francis added that we are to take care of the Holy Spirit without “imprisoning him,” asking for help from this great gift of God. We are to allow the Spirit to bring peace into our lives, a peace that we also share with all whom we meet. The Holy Spirit moves freely, like the wind.

As you know, on the Vigil of Pentecost, I will consecrate the Archdiocese of San Antonio to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. He acts in all proclaimers of the gospel who allow themselves to be possessed and led by him. I urge you to join in this consecration with your whole being. Let us ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!