

**Homily – Thursday of the Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time
Red Mass – October 5, 2023**

In the first reading, we heard about Ezra and Nehemiah. They are the two pillars of the rebirth of Judaism. Ezra promotes moral and religious restoration. Nehemiah leads the physical reconstruction. The people's assembly attends the solemn reading of the Law. This ritual highlights the fact that the text of the Law was received from God, as a sign of his covenant with the people. The Law is assumed as a norm – given by God – for life and social organization. Moses was simply a messenger. God is the true legislator. The Israelite nation is reconciled with itself when it decides to accept its calling to be a theocratic society. Yahweh is the leader of the people and the Law given to Moses is its legislative foundation.

These truths require two attitudes on the part of believers: conscientious receptivity and a demanding listening to the Word of God. God himself one day took them as his property and chose them as his people. From the Word one can only expect – thanks to God's faithfulness – an abundance of gifts and joy. The believing memory of the people updates the long account of the wonders that the Lord did on their behalf. This is the genuine cause of the strength and joy of the people, who want to recover their lost identity from God's hand. The joy of the Law of the Lord is our strength. We need more witnesses of that truth, like Saint Thomas More, whose joy of the Law of the Lord made him strong enough to state: "I die the King's good servant, and God's first."

Jesus sent only those who knew how to convey a message of hope and enthusiasm. The message was simple: "The Kingdom of

God is at hand.” The message is good like no other, and ever new; it is the Good News that God is our close Father. He is the King, and those who observe his law are his heirs. The law is also simple: spread that Good News of God’s love through witness. The fruit is justice. The envoy will develop all of his or her missionary potential if, on behalf of the one who sends them, he or she does not carry out the evangelizing work relying solely on human resources. The task requires absolute trust in the Lord who sends and, as Pope Francis suggests, also a sense of humor. That is why he personally prays and recommends this prayer by Saint Thomas More: “Grant me, Lord, good digestion, and also something to digest”.

There are no shortcuts to the perennial prayerful relationship with the owner of the harvest. What is the compendium of the evangelizing announcement? It is indicated by the emphasis that the story places on overcoming pain. The gesture of returning health to the sick is both tangible and symbolic of the healing of the deepest form of pain: moral pain. But what is central is the announcement of the closeness of a God who is our Father, and who wants to be at the side of each of his children. The mission is not exempt from rejections and misunderstandings. As a matter of fact, these perks come with the job. Jesus is the supreme humanizer. He recovers and improves the first creative design of free people, making them God’s children.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe continue to guide and protect all members of the legal profession.