

**Closing Mass for Life Awareness Retreat
Oblate Renewal Center
January 17, 2017**

“Hearing and following the voice of Christ the Good Shepherd, means letting ourselves be attracted and guided by him, in consecration to him; it means allowing the Holy Spirit to draw us into this missionary dynamism, awakening within us the desire, the joy and the courage to offer our own lives in the service of the Kingdom of God.” These were the words of our Holy Father, Pope Francis in his message for last year’s World Day of Prayer for Vocations. These words help us to understand the Gospel today in the context of our lives. Jesus took water, that wonderful substance that we find everywhere in everyday life, and he changed it into fine wine that enlivened the hearts and spirits of the guests at the wedding feast. This is what the Holy Spirit does with us when we follow the call of the Lord. As Pope Francis said, we are drawn into the missionary life of the Church, filled with joy and courage, and sent to enliven the world. We are ordinary people, changed by the power of the Holy Spirit, to do extraordinary things in the life of the world.

Each of us has been given gifts, as St. Paul told the Corinthians. Some of us are known to be people who express our faith beautifully, some do great works, some are good teachers, some are good

preachers, some are great at communicating between cultures and languages, some are skilled at challenging injustices, some are blessed in their ability to pray or lead others in prayer. There are many different gifts the Lord shares with us, and it is our honor to put those gifts at the service of the Lord. In the power of the Holy Spirit, who guides us in our call, our gifts and talents become like that fine wine the Lord provided to his guests. They inspire and heal, they open eyes and stir souls. However, this can only happen if we “let ourselves be attracted and guided by” Christ. Our vocation flows from our encounter with the Lord, he calls us through our living experience of loving him and being loved by him. We are filled with the love of God and then are driven by that amazing love to share love with others in particular ways. And this is the call we feel – the drive to share the love of God in a particular way.

Rejoice today, my friends. Whatever Christ has called you to be, he is calling you to be a powerful member of his body. You will delight the lives of others when you share the love of God in your vocation. Allow the Holy Spirit to awaken in you once more, to stir in you the joy and the desire to share the love of God. May you experience the same irresistible urge to shout God’s praises with your life, like the Prophet Isaiah whose words we heard proclaimed today: “For Zion’s sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until

her vindication shines forth like the dawn and her victory like a burning torch.” The people of the world are starving, are thirsting, are crying out for the joy of the Gospel. Let the Lord take you and transform you into his choice wine of salvation. Follow the Lord and wake up the world. To quote Pope Francis from that same message last year: “How wonderful it is to be surprised by God’s call, to embrace his word, and to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, in adoration of the divine mystery and in generous service to our neighbors! Your life will become richer and more joyful each day!”

May we take our example from our Blessed Mother, Mary. At that same wedding feast in Cana she showed us true wisdom. The stewards did not know what the Lord had in store for the people, they were confused when Jesus asked them to bring so much water. But Mary gave them the best advice anyone could ever give: “Do whatever he tells you.” Just as the Blessed Mother told them, I tell you again today: “Do whatever Jesus tells you.” Do not be afraid to follow the call he has placed in your heart. Share his love with the whole world in whatever particular way he has prepared for you, because the world is desperate for that delicious choice wine that God will provide through you. “Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations” (Ps). “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn).