



Archdiocese of San Antonio

Most Reverend Gustavo Garcia-Siller



Homily – Lumen Gentium Awards
February 2, 2016

This evening we honor members of our parishes from throughout the Archdiocese who have been nominated by their pastors for their exemplary work on behalf of their communities of faith. These sisters and brothers have brought the light of Christ to others. Each of them has been – in that sense – a *lumen gentium*, a reflection of Jesus’ light to the nations. I congratulate and thank all of them for their witness of Christian discipleship.

Our reading from the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that Jesus, our high priest, was fully human as well as divine. So, he understands our weakness, our temptations, our suffering. He came into the world to proclaim the good news of God’s mercy, compassion, and healing love for everyone – without exception!

In announcing this special Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis called upon each of us to “contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. . . Mercy [is] the bridge that connects God and [us], opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 2). The Holy Father’s new book is entitled *The Name of God is Mercy*.

It is not enough to recognize our personal need for God’s mercy; we have to share it with others. We too must be merciful and compassionate – especially towards the poor and the needy, the stranger and the outcast, the neglected and the forgotten, the suffering and the oppressed, the confused and the arrogant -- not only praying for them but reaching out in Christian love, mercy, and compassion.

At the heart of our baptismal commitment to Christian discipleship is the challenge to be light in the darkness of contemporary life. As members of the Church, each of us shares the responsibility to proclaim the gospel of **life, light, and love** – to facilitate the encounter between all people and God whose name is

mercy. My dear friends, our world – the nations – **our nation** -- desperately needs to hear God's healing, reconciling word today!

Pope Francis holds up Mary as a model for us. He says that "Mary was able to turn a stable into a home for Jesus, with poor swaddling clothes and an abundance of love. She is the handmaid of the Father who sings his praises. She is the friend who is ever concerned that wine not be lacking in our lives. She is the woman whose heart was pierced by a sword and who understands our pain...As a true mother, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles, and she constantly surrounds us with God's love" (EG, #286).

May Our Lady of Guadalupe be with us and teach us the importance of mercy and compassion.