



**Archdiocese of San Antonio**  
**Most Reverend Gustavo Garcia-Siller**



**Welcoming Remarks**  
**Mid-Winter Gathering for**  
**Catechetical Leaders and Pastoral Ministers**  
**February 9, 2016**

Good Morning,

Being a catechist is a calling....a vocation. Your answer to God's invitation is truly a blessing to our children, young people, and the whole church. I am pleased to be here this morning to welcome you to our Mid-Winter Gathering, and to thank you for your enlightened and passionate service.

Throughout the day you will be hearing inspiring talks that will help you place the Holy Father's Jubilee Year of Mercy into the context of your ministry and your life. Pope Francis made the central point to the message and meaning of this Jubilee when he wrote, "...The mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality with which he reveals his love as of that of a father or a mother, moved to the very depths out

of love for their child...It gushes forth from the depths naturally, full of tenderness and compassion, indulgence and mercy." Today may you discover ways to make God's mercy even more visible in your parishes, classrooms, and the lives of the people you serve.

Each person you encounter, regardless of age, financial status, race, or gender deserves to see the light of God's love and compassion in you, in themselves, and in others. With your help, they will seek His mercy each day and share it with family, friends, and everyone they meet.

This is a challenging time to have the truth of God's mercy penetrate through the noise and clutter that surrounds us. Therefore, I encourage you to help your students see God's mercy in you, in the message you deliver, how you approach the teaching of Catholic Doctrine, and how you open up their hearts and help them encounter Him in His Word.

In the coming year the archdiocese will offer many opportunities to celebrate God's love. Please join us and consider taking a pilgrimage to a Holy Door as one of the resolutions the pope asks us to make on our path to forgiveness. Of course, next fall we will celebrate the Jubilee for Catechists. On March 4th and 5th we will celebrate "24 Hours for the Lord", during which confessions will be continuously heard and conclude with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The Jubilee for High

School youth and seminarians will be in April, the Jubilee for the Sick and Persons with Disabilities observance will be in June, and Young Adults will have their special day too on Sunday, July 30th.

Pope Francis shared this thought with young people, but I believe it applies to all...regardless of age. "*Merciful like the Father*" is the theme of the Jubilee, but it is also the prayer we make for all of you as we welcome you in the name of Jesus. To be merciful means to grow in love which is courageous, generous and real." Thank you for all that you do in Christ's name, and thank you for being here with us today.