



# **Archdiocese of San Antonio**

## **Most Reverend Gustavo Garcia-Siller**



**Homily for the Fourth Sunday of Lent  
March 6, 2016**

**“Rejoice, O Jerusalem; and gather round, all you who love her; rejoice in gladness, after having been in sorrow; exult and be replenished with the consolation flowing from her motherly bosom.”** This is the entrance antiphon from today’s Mass. In Latin it starts out, “Laetare Jerusalem,” calling all of God’s people to gather together in the Church to drink our fill of mercy and love. The Holy Spirit, alive in the Church, pours forth merciful love for all people, and this why we rejoice today. Laetare! Rejoice!

This is the message of today’s Mass. Throughout Lent we have been remembering our sins with sorrow and contrition. We have been asking God to help us convert our hearts and come back to him. We are like the prodigal coming back to the Father in the Gospel of Luke. So often we come back reluctantly, worried about not being worthy to call ourselves sons or daughters of the Father. How could he ever love us after what we have done? But our God is truly amazing. The

Father sees us, even while we are still a long way off, and he jumps up and runs to us with love in his eyes. He throws his arms around us brings us home. This is the nature of God, and it is our reason to rejoice. Like Pope Francis wrote when he pronounced the Year of Mercy: “Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy... We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 1-2). We have been saved by God’s mercy, and made new – just like the prodigal in Jesus’ parable. St. Paul tells us the same thing in his words to the Corinthians: “Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.”

However, our joy comes with a promise. Again, listen to the words of St. Paul: “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ... and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us.” Jesus Christ is the mercy of the Father, and we are in Christ. So, we must be people of mercy, ambassadors of mercy. May we not be like the second son, who had a hard time being merciful like the Father. May we rejoice in the mercy of God that has saved us, and share that mercy with others. Today, forgive that person you have not been able

**to forgive. Mend that relationship that has been broken. Reach out to that person from whom you are separated. Be an ambassador of mercy. Let the joy of being forgiven by the Father who loves us give you the strength to be merciful like him.**

**May Mary, queen of mercy, teach us to be faithful to the call of mercy. “For now we must celebrate and rejoice, because [we were] dead and have come to life again; [we were] lost and have been found.”**