



Archdiocese of San Antonio

Most Reverend Gustavo Garcia-Siller



Homily – Installation of Lectors and Acolytes October 31, 2015

Good morning to our candidates for the ministries of lector and acolyte, your families and friends who are here to support you and pray with you. This is an important moment of grace as you continue your journey to the Permanent Diaconate. This morning you will be given the opportunity to say "**Yes**" to new levels of service to God, the Church, and all the faithful. You will also be challenged to seek a new depth of understanding of what you are called to ***be***, in addition to what you are called to ***do***.

A **Lector** is called to lend their voice to the ***Word of God*** so that it can come to life in the hearts and souls of all who hear it. **Acolytes** have a unique calling to service at the altar and a special intimacy with the Eucharist in many important ways that bring the "**Bread of Life**" to those you serve.

At Mass, we encounter God in His Word, in the Sacrifice of the Altar, and in the faith community that surrounds the **Table**. This encounter

also calls us to a dialogue with God and one another about Jesus presence among us and the Divine plan for salvation. Today's readings all reveal something about this personal encounter, helping us to satisfy our hunger for truth, life, and love. The writer of **Deuteronomy** tells us that we are called to "**Love the Lord God with your whole heart and your whole being.**" This love grows in us, showing itself in profound loyalty and faith.

This calling is not a bitter pill to be swallowed, but as the **Psalmist** writes, it is "**More desirable than gold...sweeter also than honey...**" Our encounter with God is truly an immersion in love. But first, we must open our hearts and let Him replace anything that ties us to this world and prevents us from sharing in all that God wants to give us.

In the **Gospel** we read about the crowd who had been fed by Jesus as he multiplied the loaves and fishes. He took pity on them because they needed nourishment for their bodies and the souls. When they follow Jesus to Capernaum, he tells them that they were more worried about their **stomachs** than their **souls**. He had offered them the bread that "**...comes from heaven and gives life to the world.**" Sadly they still seemed lost in their earthly appetites.

Jesus doesn't give up on them, and he doesn't give up on us either, as he opens **His Sacred Heart** to the world, revealing, ***"I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."*** This is not a message of judgment, it is a promise of hope. It is Jesus reaching out and looking at us with eyes that pierce through our worldly veneer, penetrating our hearts with the truth that he came to reveal. He remains with us today to nourish our whole being.

We are fed by the Eucharist, but we are also nourished by the Word of God. **St. Paul** writes to his **beloved Timothy**; ***"From infancy you have known the Sacred Scriptures which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."*** His Wisdom heals our blindness that prevents us from discovering Jesus in those who hunger and thirst for justice and yearn for God's mercy. It is in us that they will encounter Jesus Christ when we live as **His Missionary Disciples**.

In his Apostolic Exhortation, ***"The Joy of the Gospel"***, Pope Francis encourages and challenges each one of us with these words; ***"I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unflinchingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since***

“no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”. In today's *Psalm* this invitation is affirmed. We are told that the **Word of God** refreshes the soul with an uncomplicated wisdom that will give us the clarity of heart and mind to invite others to encounter the Lord. Just as the Holy Father tells us, the *Psalmist* also declares that when the Word of God is written on our hearts, it will cause rejoicing.

For you men who are about to be installed as **Lectors**, I invite you to deepen your love for God's Word as you proclaim it in the Liturgy and with your lives. Allow people to see the truth of God's Word in all you do. You are entrusted to proclaim the truth of God's great love for us. This is what the writer of *Deuteronomy* means when he urges us to wear God's Word on "...your arm as a sign-and let them be as a pendant on your forehead." Your faith and love must be visible wherever you are.

Those of you who will be installed as Acolytes, please allow the Holy Spirit to enter your hearts and increase your love of the Eucharist and deepen your desire to bring "**The Bread of Life**" to all those who hunger for God's food for the soul. You must humbly pray...so that the intimacy that comes from those deeply private moments with God will fill you with compassion for those whose hearts are empty yearning to

be filled. St. Thomas Aquinas promises you that, "***The Eucharist is the Sacrament of Love; It signifies Love, it produces Love,***"

As we join you on your journey of formation and faith, we must remember that, whether we are clergy, religious or laity, each of us are called to serve one another as bearers of the truth, "***Glorifying God with our lives.***"