

**I am so pleased, dear sisters and members of the MACC community, to be celebrating the Sacred Liturgy with you today. First, it is an honor to host you here in San Antonio, and secondly, your presence and willingness to serve in Consecrated Life is an inspiration for us all. You and your communities have made many sacrifices for you to be here with us these days. I hope this time is truly profitable for you!**

**“Comfort! Give comfort to my people,” cries the Lord God through the words of the Prophet Isaiah. It is a mission given to us. A mission to bring God’s own consolation to the people of this world – most especially those who are suffering. The Prophet Isaiah is addressing Jewish people who have been living in exile, and whose very identity has been torn from them. They are poor, not only materially, but also spiritually. They have lost everything: their nationhood, their traditions, their language and culture, and even their hope. It is in this situation that God looks upon his people with compassion and offers them the vision of a renewed Mountain of the Lord, a new Zion, where God’s kingdom shall reign.**

**Jesus faced a similar situation as he encountered the people of Palestine and Judah in his time. Many of the common people were like sheep without a shepherd. The leaders of the Temple in Jerusalem had become corrupt, and the Romans were occupying their land and draining their resources for their own empire. Here, Jesus offers us an image of what it means to “give comfort to my people,” by telling the story of the shepherd who goes in search of the one lost sheep. Searching for the lost, going out after the ones’ in need – these are examples of bringing comfort to God’s People. This,**

**I believe, is what the Holy Father, Pope Francis, is asking of us when he asks us to go to the margins, to go to those places where the light of Christ is most needed.**

**In modern American society we deal with a vast spiritual poverty, and a disengagement from faith and the traditions of our faith. While there are great opportunities and freedoms here in this country, there can also be a coldness and a lack of belonging – a lack of care for the most tender and broken. This is where we must come in. This is the invitation for us today to “give comfort to my people, says the Lord.”**

**My dear sisters, let us fulfill what God has asked of us. Let us thank God for being found worthy to serve Him in this way. I pray every blessing for you and your ministry, and I hope that your experience here at MACC may strengthen you and guide you.**