



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



**Homily – Federation of Guadalupanas**  
**December 6, 2015**

**We are invited into a wilderness today. The theme of the wilderness in the Bible is twofold: the desert is a place far from civilization and the city; it is also a place to be close to God.**

**In our first reading a prophet addresses Jerusalem, which had been destroyed. Nearly all of her inhabitants – God’s chosen people – had been taken into exile far from home. The prophet comforts the city: your people will return. God himself is leading them with joy. They will cross the wilderness but God will lead them back safely.**

**In today’s gospel God raises up another prophet, John the Baptist, and sends him into the Judean wilderness to call people to “prepare the way of the Lord.” God is coming with salvation for all. He will remove all obstacles in order to come to us at Christmas. As we stand in the wilderness this afternoon, we ask ourselves: what obstacles need to be removed in our lives so that God can truly come**

**to us? What do we need to do during Advent to prepare for Jesus' arrival at Christmas?**

**We are only two days away from the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the opening of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. This Year of Mercy reminds us of our own need for God's mercy and compassion. It calls us to a fresh approach to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But, even more importantly, it challenges us to be merciful like our heavenly Father. Pope Francis urges us to take up the works of corporal and spiritual mercy in order to "reawaken our conscience too often grown dull in the face of poverty." He urges us to enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. The Holy Father says: "When confronted with evil deeds, even in the face of serious crimes, it is the time to listen to the cry of innocent people who are deprived of their property, their dignity, their feelings, and their very lives."**

**The Year of Mercy calls us to conversion of mind, heart, and spirit. Even as we personally experience divine mercy, we are to dedicate our daily lives to "living the mercy which the Father extends to all of us" – extending it to everyone without exception.**

**We are also anticipating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe who promises to be with us always. As members of the Federation of Guadalupanas, let us implore her intercession to help us remove**

**obstacles in our life to being truly at home with God -- and sharing  
God's mercy, love, and compassion with everyone!**