



Archdiocese of San Antonio

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Homily – Mass for Consecrated Life

February 8, 2015

The Book of Job may seem depressing to those who do not encounter in it the mystery of the transcendent God working in the world and in the lives of individuals. At an early stage in the book, which we just heard, Job openly complains about human life in general and also about God. Job describes his life as “like the wind” that is passing, empty, a mere puff of breath. For Job all of life is a fever. Job may not be our favorite biblical book, but it aptly describes the circumstances of the lives of millions of individuals, families, and communities throughout the world today. As followers of Jesus we cannot turn our backs on them and merely thank God for our own blessings. As consecrated religious they are very important people to us, essential to our mission and ministry.

In the gospel, after teaching on the Sabbath in a synagogue, Jesus goes to Simon’s house for dinner. Simon’s mother-in-law has a fever which Jesus cures. Her response is the discipleship of lowly service – a model to which Jesus will repeatedly call his disciples throughout the gospel and

which he himself practices consistently. Indeed, after sunset when the Sabbath regulations about movement were lifted, people bring many, many people to Jesus for healing, and he turns no one away.

Early the next morning Jesus withdraws to a quiet place, apparently to pray to his heavenly Father. Simon and his companions seek Jesus out and tell him that the crowds need him. They are aware of the people's needs, but do nothing themselves to help them. They want to manage Jesus' agenda and ministry!

Jesus shows us how to be his true followers. He teaches, heals, and preaches. His faith, prayer, and firm obedience to the Father's will give us an example. He knows his mission and carries it out generously, tirelessly, joyfully.

In his letter to the Corinthians Paul knows that some of them think it is enough to profess belief in Jesus and to participate in the sacraments. Paul indicates that much more is involved – especially proclaiming the gospel faithfully and serving others.

In his homily for the World of Consecrated Life last Sunday Pope Francis pointed out that “Jesus came not to do his own will, but the will of the Father.” Therefore, the Holy Father said that “in the same way, all

those who follow Jesus must set out on the path of obedience, imitating as it were the Lord's 'condescension' by humbling themselves and making their own the will of the Father even to self-emptying and abasement." He added that:

for us, as consecrated persons, this path takes the form of the rule, marked by the charism of the founder. For all of us, the essential rule remains the Gospel, yet the Holy Spirit, in his infinite creativity, also gives it expression in the various rules of the consecrated life which are born of [following Christ] and thus from this journey of abasing oneself by serving.

Pope Francis says that we must not live our consecrated life "lightly or in an unincarnate manner, as it were some sort of [esoteric knowledge] which would ultimately reduce religious life to caricature, a caricature in which there is following without renunciation, prayer without encounter, [community] life without communion, obedience without trust, and charity without transcendence."

During this special year of Consecrated Life, we are called to renew our commitment to the Lord Jesus and his gospel, to the charisms of our founders, to obedience to our Rules, and to service of the needy, the sick, the lonely, the starving, victims of violence and trafficking – all who like Job

experience life as a fever, a drudgery, something merely to be endured.

We are called and sent to proclaim the gospel of joy by the way we encounter and bring God's love, compassion, and mercy to them.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe accompany us along our pilgrim way of mission and ministry in imitation of her beloved Son.