



Archdiocese of San Antonio
Most Reverend Gustavo Garcia-Siller



Homily – Lumen Getium and Christe Fideles Laici
February 2, 2015

Good evening my sisters and brothers in Christ,

In tonight's reading from the letter to the Hebrews, St. Paul proclaims that "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness...." Our Lord Jesus understands the challenges we face, the pain we might feel, even the disappointment we might experience as we respond to our call to holiness. Jesus knew that being his disciple would not always be an easy path, but one on which we would carry our own cross. All of you here this evening, I ask you to hear this comforting truth of our Lord. Our Lord felt the heat of the desert as it parched his skin, he felt the deceptive allure of temptation, and like us he felt the Father's enduring love.

Today is the Feast of the Presentation, and in the Mass of the day we also learned from Hebrews that Jesus truly understands our humanity when St. Paul wrote, "...he had to become like his brothers [and sisters] in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God...." Jesus became like us in all things but sin, taking on all that is human, becoming human, to bring the divine will and human life together

forever. Christ called the first disciples by name to follow him, to transform the hearts of others, to proclaim the Good News, to do God's will.

Likewise, He also summons us to be a sources of his light and life. In Colossians we read that through His beloved Son, the Father, "Rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom..." We are invited to be a merciful, compassionate, and joyous reflection of Jesus, the Light of the World. All that is truly human, truly good in us, is joined to the light of heaven, and to shine that light in our own lives.

In his Apostolic Exhortation, "Joy of the Gospel", Pope Francis writes, "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.' The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms."

We are here tonight to celebrate the light of faith that shines from you whom we honor with the Lumen Gentium and Christe Fideles Laici Awards. Lumen Gentium translated means "The Light of Nations" and Christe Fideles Laici translates to "Christ's Faithful People." Both affirm the laity's rightful role and responsibility that springs from your baptism, to listen to God's voice and respond, "Here I am Lord, I come to do your will."

You have been so generous with the gifts that God has given you, but I know that there have also been many times when you carried out your ministry to God's people and it did not seem so joyful. Sometimes the call came at the end of a long day, when you just wanted rest. There were those encounters when your generosity was returned with disinterest or even rejection by those you only wanted to serve. Maybe your confidence

was shaken by uncertainty and you needed to listen more closely for the Holy Spirit to know that you are doing God's will and will be strengthened by His gifts.

In the Second Vatican Council's document, "*Lumen Gentium*," we hear the council fathers' words of challenge and encouragement, "... There are no second-class Catholics. All are equally called to holiness." You have been a light that brightens the shadows in the lives of others. Through your faithful service, many have experienced Christ's presence in our midst. Through your diligence and patience you have resisted the temptation to just walk away. Strengthened by faith, you have touched the hearts of many people with God's love, and through your labor of love you are shining examples of the New Evangelization.

My dear friends, congratulations to all who we honor today. Thank you for your service, thank you for being light to the nations. I offer my gratitude to the pastors who nominated you for this award as affirmation of all that you do. I am also grateful for the opportunity to recognize Robert and Linda Kiolbassa, our Christe Fideles Laici honorees. They also are truly distinguished members of Christ's Faithful People.

At the Pentecost Vigil, I consecrated the Archdiocese to the Holy Spirit with this prayer: "In all my actions grant me the grace of being my light, my guide, my strength, and the love of my heart." As we journey together on our path to holiness may the Holy Spirit continue to lead us to do the good works, big and small, that we are called to carry out in Jesus name. May Mary, Our Blessed Mother and the first disciple, remain our example of a humble and obedient life. Just as she was open to the power of the Holy Spirit, may we always proclaim, "Ven! Holy Spirit, Ven!"