



# **Archdiocese of San Antonio**

## **Most Reverend Gustavo García-Siller**



**Homily – Ordination to the Priesthood**

**May 16, 2015**

**Today is a day of great joy and celebration for Assumption Seminary and the entire Archdiocese of San Antonio -- for Deacons Jorge Campos, Chris Munoz, Jason Martini, and their families and friends – and for the entire Church of God as these three men are ordained to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. My brothers, to you the Lord will continue to fulfill his promise to be a Good Shepherd, one who knows his people and cares for them.**

**In today's first reading the Spirit of God comes down upon an anonymous prophet and sends him on a mission "to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the LORD." In the synagogue at Nazareth Jesus uses the same passage to describe his own mission and ministry.**

**My brothers, the world needs prophetic voices today – to tear down and to build – to plant and to uproot the plant – to mourn and to**

dance – to tear and to sew – to be silent and to speak. As the Book of Ecclesiastes says, “there is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.” It is all written in God’s plan, and we have to be filled with the very wisdom of God to know what time it is! The gift of the Holy Spirit helps us to discern the time, the message, the gesture appropriate to each situation and in every circumstance.

As a priest, you will be called to exercise the prophetic ministry described by Isaiah and fulfilled in Jesus. Anyone who hopes to exercise this ministry effectively must be willing to get close to people, the kind of people Isaiah describes: the lowly, the brokenhearted, the captive, the imprisoned, those who mourn. People want you to be close to them so that you can touch their lives with Jesus’ healing power. You need to know them intimately so that you can relate the gospel to their concrete life situation. You must be willing to get your hands dirty – as Pope Francis has consistently reminded us. St. Paul tells them: “Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers, in which you tend the church of God that he acquired with his own blood.” These words have everlasting value for all priests – and bishops! Keep watch over yourselves – in season and out of

season – when you are refreshed and energetic, and when you are tired and weary. As Pope Francis pointed out in his homily at the Chrism Mass this year, the Lord “knows that the task of anointing his faithful people is demanding; it can tire us. . . There is a good and healthy tiredness. It is the exhaustion of the priest who wears the smell of the sheep. . . but also smiles the smile of a father rejoicing in his children or grandchildren.” Keep watch over yourselves and know that “our weakness goes straight to the heart of the Father.”

Keep watch also over the flock entrusted to your care. Like the Good Shepherd, you will lead them to green pastures and safe waters, you will restore their strength, you will guide them along the right path, you will walk with them in dark valleys and give them courage and hope. Jesus will enable you to do precisely all of this.

Jesus tells us his disciples: “I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain. . . Love one another” (Jn 15:15-17).

My friends, it is the Holy Spirit that enables the community of faith to proclaim the gospel, to have something to say worth hearing. God has the power to accomplish in our midst what he wants – in

spite of all obstacles. But what must we do to enable this to happen? We must be open to God's word as the anonymous prophet in Isaiah and Jesus were. We must be willing to be empowered by the Holy Spirit like Paul and the presbyters. And most of all we must be in a loving, mutual relationship with Jesus, the risen Lord.

Such a relationship is not restricted in time. It is to be an **abiding**, loving relationship. It is to grow ever deeper and stronger, leading us always to say "Yes" and "Amen" to the Father, to carry out his will, to observe his commandments. We are to love God fully, holding nothing back. And to love one another as Jesus has loved us – continuously, without limits, throughout our life.

Such love is not grudging. It is truly a joy. And again, it is not something that we have come to ourselves. **God loves us first**. The Lord Jesus has chosen us to be his beloved disciples. We are **all** called to share God's love with the world – with everyone we meet, wherever we go, wherever God leads us.

My brothers about to be ordained, let us pray with confidence because our future is truly in God's good hands. Let us also re-commit ourselves to working together because our future, empowered by God's Spirit, is also in our hands.

**May Our Lady, the Mother of the Church, intercede with her beloved Son so that each of you new priests – and all of us -- will be true disciples of the risen Lord – so that you will bring glad tidings to the lowly, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners!**