



Archdiocese of San Antonio
Most Reverend Gustavo García-Siller



Homily for the Feast of San Toribio Romo

March 21, 2015

Today is the last day in a series of Gospel passages of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. He finishes his great prayer before he is arrested, calling for unity among God's people. He calls for the deepest kind of unity, the same unity that the Father and the Son share together. Isn't that amazing? Hear the words of Jesus' prayer: "That they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us." Jesus is praying for us to be united as much as he and the Father are united. We are to be as close to each other and to God as God is to himself! This is quite a beautiful prayer from our Lord, and quite a challenge. Because if we are honest with ourselves, we Christians have nowhere near that level of unity.

We also celebrate today the feast of San Toribio Romo, a priest and martyr of the Church. San Toribio is called upon by many in our Church as a patron saint of those who immigrate to a different country. He was known to have a great devotion to the Eucharist, asking the Lord in prayer to never let a day of his life

pass without receiving him in communion. San Toribio knew well the prayer Jesus had made, that Jesus may be in us, so that we may be in him, and through him, be with the Father and the Holy Spirit. That unity, that communion, was so important to this great saint.

But still the fact remains, we are not united. Even in our parishes, we are divided. We allow ourselves to worry and to fight about small things. We allow ourselves to be divided. Sadly, we Christians are also guilty of ignoring or shunning some members of our society. Today we hear about Paul's imprisonment, and Jesus' last moments before being arrested. Often we ignore the plight of our brothers and sisters who are imprisoned and detained. We excuse ourselves saying that they have done bad things and are receiving the proper punishment for their crimes. But regardless of the law and what they have done or not done, they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. How can we turn our backs on them? We should stand for justice, but not justice without love and mercy. How do we maintain our unity with our brothers and sisters in prison, in jail, or in detention centers? How do you maintain that unity in your own life? Remember the words of Jesus in his parable of the sheep and the goats, when he praised those blessed ones saying, "I was in prison and you visited me" (Matthew 25).

We have a special heart for those immigrant families who are in detention centers. We pray for them especially today on this feast of their patron. I ask God to help us soften and open our hearts, to see these families as families in need, not as dangers to our society or simply as faceless law-breakers. They are our sisters and brothers, and we should desire to fulfill the prayer of Jesus as fully as we can. They should be as close to us in our heart as Jesus is. That is what our Lord commands; that is what he prayed.

None of us is greater than our Lord, but all of us are called to open our hearts like his. May San Toribio help us with his prayers, calling us in this Mass and always to greater communion with God and with each other. Through the intercession of Mary, Mother of all people and our mother, mother of the immigrant and the imprisoned, help us with her grace and prayers to be people who desire the great unity of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.