

Homily – Tuesday of the Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time Catholic Schools Convocation at St. Mark’s – August 9, 2022

The way the Lord speaks to Ezekiel in the first reading may sound like an exhausted mother speaking to a picky child: “open your mouth and eat what I shall give you.” These words may strike us as “Lamentation and wailing and woe.” At least much of our world perceives the message of the Church that way. Youth are particularly susceptible to stereotypes attached to Catholicism, which present it as a boring and rigid system of rules and disciplines based on guilt.

Those of us who know different have one thing in common: we have encountered the Lord. We have opened our mouth – so to speak – to taste the Lord’s promise. We have fed our belly and filled our stomach with the “scroll” given to us. We ate it, and it was as sweet as honey. It is God’s Word made flesh!

What the prophet is sent to convey is not the result of his analysis of the situation. It is given to him: Go and speak my words. He has first digested the words. He witnesses to his own experience: “I ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth.” Likewise, after tasting the word of God, we are moved to proclaim it. It may have seemed bitter at first, but once we were convinced to accept it, it sweetened all bitterness. Younger generations urgently need that witness.

A witness stands on the foundation on which he or she has been built. Our foundation is the word which feeds and satisfies. As it did to the prophet, its effects reach our

existential intimacy. Our mission is not only to voice accusations, but to point out the way to the Lord, and to announce the sweetness of his saving word. Our world and our lives have truly been saved. Our salvation shines the brightest precisely at the times which would seem darkest. Our mission is to prepare souls precisely to discover that truth.

Conversion begins with a change of mentality. At every step towards maturity, we need to become more like children, which means greater simplicity, humility, desire to learn and no duplicity. Whoever becomes like children, will not look down on anyone, but rather lift them.

As we are moved by the sweet word of God to lift our little ones to their encounter with Him, we are moved to look after the smallest of God's children. We become more sensitive to those who have been left behind, those who are forgotten by others and by society. We discover the absence of someone and are encouraged to try to look for them and bring them to communion. Thus, we learn to listen to each other and to work together for the common good and the salvation of all.

According to Pope Francis, "That is what a synodal Church means: everyone has a part to play, no individual in the place of others or above others. There are no first or second class Christians; everyone has been called."

Blessed Mother of Guadalupe, help us be continuously aware that God "wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth." (1Tim 2:4).