

**Homily – Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Sending Forth Mass at SFC – September 10, 2023**

The book of Ezekiel places the mission of the prophet, as a symbolic figure, at the top of a watchtower, as if he were a watchman. His mission is to encourage the people to change their behavior. The salvation of many is at stake. For this reason, the prophet cannot ignore his mission: he is a custodian. He must warn of what is happening. He speaks on God's behalf, represented as the guardian of Israel. The prophets are God's watchmen to call and warn. The people themselves need custodians for their lives to have meaning. Ezekiel's role is to ensure the fidelity of the people of the covenant. He must firmly and faithfully fulfill God's word, whether in terms of hope or judgment.

In the letter to the Romans, Saint Paul says that the most important duty for a Christian is to love God and neighbor. This is what the law and the prophets are all about. All the commandments are summarized in this twofold love. Only love makes way for unity, which is the fruit of God's action. For a Christian, having enemies is forbidden. We must love all people, not just those who think like me, or practice the same faith as me. The important thing here is to ask myself what makes me the master of my heart. Or even better, what allows the Lord to be the master of my heart? Is it love or hatred? If, despite wanting to forgive, I cannot do it because I have been a victim of terror or hatred, then I need to ask that question: Who is the master of my heart? Love offers something new to us: to include the

enemy, so that it is not hate or revenge that has the last word. In the reign of the Holy Spirit, evil is never the end.

The Gospel of Matthew invites us to reflect on the welcome of new members into the community and their way of proceeding in forgiveness. Fraternal correction is very important, because we are all sinners, and at the same time we have a certain right to privacy. But when it comes to serious sins that affect communion, a charitable practice of admonition is necessary: first alone, then with counselor witnesses, and finally to the community. The power to bind and loose, which was conferred on Peter at another time, finds greater meaning here. It is in the environment of the community where the forgiveness of sins fulfilled.

As we proceed to the “sending forth” of Daniel Delgado Acosta, let us also become aware that we all have a particular vocation, a path. We are all called to follow a unique path of love – carefully prepared for each one of us – guided by the Holy Spirit. Pope Francis has said: *“Led by the Spirit, Christians are challenged to respond to existential peripheries and human dramas, ever conscious that the mission is God’s work; it is not carried out by us alone, but always in ecclesial communion, together with our brothers and sisters, and under the guidance of the Church’s pastors. For this has always been God’s dream: that we should live with him in a communion of love.”*

Our Lady of Guadalupe, help us respond generously to our calling and remain faithful to the Holy Spirit.