

Fr. Larry's Homily – January 20th, 2008

Good morning! Some of you are messing me up today, you're sitting on the wrong side of church. You know I look out there, I'm used to seeing people in the same place. About four of you changed on me – what'd you do, you did that on purpose just to mess me up didn't you? It is cold outside. I hate it just so you know.

I want you to look with me today to the Gospel and to the other readings. You know the Gospel is a phenomenal Gospel and it says, "Behold the Lamb of God." But that's not what I'm preaching on. We're going to sit there and deal with the three different people: we have Isaiah, we have Paul, and we have St. John the Baptist. And there's a theme running through all three of these readings. In the first reading Isaiah says, "Now the Lord has spoken who formed me as his servant from the womb." So Isaiah has a great sense that from the womb God had formed him for a particular reason, and it goes on to say that. In the second reading we have St. Paul. St. Paul says, "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus, by the will of God." So he was called to be an apostle by the will of God. And then we get the Gospel. And in the Gospel we see John the Baptist, and he says, "I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me."

So here we've got Isaiah, we've got St. Paul, and we've got St. John the Baptist. And each of them were very much aware that they were called by God to fulfill his plan for a particular purpose. How about you? Do you know that God has called you from the womb, that He has a particular purpose for you? That God has a plan for your life? I believe most Catholics do not buy that. They just go to church, and they sit there and they try to be good people, and they hope God blesses them, and when they come before God they say, "God bless me and help me, and you know I'm just trying to make it along here Father." Well that's nice, but that isn't what God wants. It's from the beginning, from the moment you were conceived God has a particular purpose and plan for your life.

But the question is, do you want that? Do you desire that? Do you want it for your life, or do you want your plan? Do you want your plan or do you want God's? Now the first plan of God is a general plan for everybody. And that general plan for everybody we hear about it in the second reading today. And since y'inz all paid close

attention to the second reading, you know what's God's will for us. St. Paul says this is God's will for you – called to be holy. Holy.

So the first thing God calls us to be is Holy. Now some people don't want to be holy. Now nobody here, I know, but some people. Again I told you about the priest when I gave my first homily and said, "we're all called to be saints", and he pounds the table and says, "I don't want to be a saint." Oh, that's nice. But it's called to be a saint. Now again, some people have a weird sense of sanctity, or holiness. They think if we're like, like Billy Joel. Remember those of you who are older like me remember Billy Joel. The younger kids who are here are going, "who's that?" Just some old person who used to sing. Anyway he had that song out, and there was that one song, "Only the Good Die Young" remember that one? And so there was one line that used to say, "I would rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints." And that's a lie! "I'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints." Never heard this, kids, did you? You have to ask your parents to pull out the old albums.

Anyway, I'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints – that's a lie. You know that. We never talk about, you've never heard about the communion of the damned, have you? There is no such thing as the communion of the damned. There's the communion of the saints. Big difference. People sit there and say, "Well if I go to Hell, I'm going to have a lot of company. And we're going to have a fine time." No you're not. You are going to be alone forever. Remember Theresa of Avila? The thing that changed Theresa was one day God allowed her to feel her place in Hell. And she was totally alone. And she saw herself, felt herself suffering, and she could see everybody else who was suffering but they couldn't move. Totally alone forever. There is no communion of the damned. The damned are alone and suffer forever. The Communion is with the saints. That the saints by definition laugh, are joyful, have fellowship forever.

So the first question is, "Do you want to be holy?" I would think you would, because the alternative is not a good thing. Again and when that happens, when you realize that God has called you to be holy, then that's a general purpose. But He has a particular purpose in your life. Friday for my day off what I did was I watched the movie "Witness to Hope", which is the movie on Pope John Paul II's life. And again as I was reflecting, I'm sitting there thinking, "Boy we've got it so easy here." I mean I don't

know how hard your life is, but you've got it easy. I got it easy. You know I come from an alcoholic father and all that – I have nothing compared to John Paul.

When he was nine his mother died. Before he was born his sister who his mother and father had, four months old died a child, an infant. And those of you who have lost children know how hard that is. So this is what he was born into. His mother dies at nine of heart failure, heart disease when he was nine years old, his young mother. His brother who was a doctor dies when he was eleven. Now it's just him and his dad. Now the Communists come in and start killing all of his friends. He watches his friends die in public. He comes running home from work one day, a hard worker in the stone quarry, and at twenty years old he comes in and finds his father dead in bed. And at twenty years old John Paul is an orphan. He has nothing. His friends are killed. He enters the seminary – you can be killed on sight just for going to the seminary. Shot on sight. One of his friends one day who he was serving Mass with, they both left the mass – his friend was shot and killed and he happened to survive. He was hit one day by a German car, thrown into the gutter. And when he woke up he thought, "God saved me for a reason." And in all his suffering he sat there and said, "My life is at the plan of God. God has a purpose for my life." And he lived that way, and he knew that the God of the universe chose him for a particular reason.

And some of us sit there and think, "Well yeah that's good for Isaiah, that's good for John the Baptist, that's good for John Paul II, that's good for St. Paul, but what would God do with me?" Ha! God would do a lot with you, if you want his will in your life. If you'll sit there and take your plan and put it aside, and say, "Okay God, I want your plan, not mine." And you live that way, in such a way that no matter what's happened that God has a purpose.

Now get this – He will not make you do His will, because He would be an ogre. It's freedom. Do you want His will? Do you want to fulfill his purpose in your life? Or do you want to come here and say, "Okay God, this is what I want you to do for me". Go for it if that's what you want, but you'll never have peace and you'll never truly be happy. You'll have moments of it, but when you and I do His will we'll be happy, we'll have peace. Now it might cost us our heads, poor John the Baptist, but he sought God's will. We still talk about John the Baptist and you should see John today as he glories himself with the Lord and all the angels and saints in heaven. What do you want - your will or God's will? Do you know that from the moment of your existence He has a

purpose for you? He's called you to do something for His glory. And when you and I do that, we make His will on this earth and we continue the plan of God and we can change the world. Maybe not the whole world, but the world of our family, the world of the people we work with – God has a plan.

Will you say yes to that plan, or do you say, "I know you have a plan but my plan is better"? Don't be a fool. He can see tomorrow. You can't. today when you say the Our Father make sure you mean it, "Your will be done." May each of you know His love today and forever, Amen.