

### **Fr. Larry's Homily – Jan 27, 2008**

Are you ready? I don't think so, not today. Let me give you a hint. Yesterday of course I was in Kalamazoo, Michigan, speaking at a men's conference. And on my way up – I left here Friday at nine o'clock in the morning and got up there at about five o'clock in the afternoon. And yesterday when I came back it was snowing for four of the hours, you know, throughout Michigan, and finally when I got to Ohio it stopped. Just another reason I keep thinking, "I HATE snow, I HATE winter with all my being!" But anyway that has nothing to do with the homily.

But on the way up, I got a call from one of my, one of the people I'm closest to, one of my best friends, been my best friend if you will for twenty years. And he's been to many of my retreats and conferences and different things but he never, I always say he never would jump into the water. You know, married him and baptized his children, he was calling me about getting his son into (he's out in San Diego) about getting his son into a Catholic school out there. And for the Catholic school you have preschool you have a \$3,000 a year tuition. Can you imagine? It's ridiculous! But that's the thing just for preschool, and when it gets to grade school its \$5,000 a year tuition.

But anyway he says, "You know I'm not a good Catholic, you know I want to send my kid to a good school." I said, "Excuse me? Let's go back. What did you just say?" He goes, "Well, uh, you know, I didn't want to lay this on you, but you know I don't believe any of this stuff." I said, "Believe any of what stuff?" "Oh come on, Father, you're a smart man. How can you believe in a Virgin birth? How can you believe that this man was God? Come on, think about it! Would you just think?" And he's sitting there coming at me, and I'm thinking okay now keep calm, because I usually get pretty crazy here. And he's sitting there saying, "Come on."

And I said, "Well, son, then last night when I spent the hour before the God of the universe (because I had done my holy hour the night before), that was a complete waste of time." He said, "Oh, I believe in God. I just don't believe Jesus is God. Come on then, how can you?" And I said, "Well if He's not God then I've wasted my whole life! My whole life has been a waste, you know that?" I said, "Did you see those things that we have on the front of the Lighthouse Media things?" that we have in the back here, and he has in the back there and throughout the world there's, if you haven't noticed yet there's

pictures of Mother Theresa of Calcutta, Fulton Sheen, Scott Hahn, Father Caropi, and that Father Larry Richards is in there somewhere in the midst of that on the bottom. And I said, "So everything I've done of course, and all the things I go around, it's a complete waste of time son because it's a lie if Christ isn't God." "Well I wouldn't say you wasted your life," he said, "Father. You know, God is God and He'll take care of you if you want to believe in that stuff." Oh! I said, "Son," he was killing me is what it was, "you've got to sit there and you've got to take 24 hours and you've got to jump in to know Christ."

Because did you hear the Gospel? Jesus didn't invite the early disciples to a cultural thing. He didn't invite them to a teaching. He invited them to, "Come and follow Me. Enter into a relationship with Me." And I said, "Son, the only thing I can tell you is that Jesus Christ is alive and He's changed my life and I've spent an hour with him for the last twenty some years. I know Him. But you, the problem is you never have jumped in to get to know Him."

And then I'm coming back yesterday and I get a call from another one of my friends who's in Florida. And his wife is sitting there, and his wife's father who is very young just had a stroke and died. And then she's sitting there and a good friend of their's they lost their son in an automobile accident when he was 16 years old. And that was last year, and then they left the Church for awhile and then they finally came back. And then their grandkids were just in an auto accident just two days ago, and they almost died, and it was really bad, these little children. And she looked at her husband and she said, "What's the point? What's the point of going to church? What's the point of doing all of these things if all this crap still happens to you?" And so that's, we were talking about that. And I said this is the reality.

First of all, you've got to realize like I said to that kid and like I said to that man yesterday, this world isn't home. If you expect everything to be perfect here you are going to be messed up. Life isn't perfect, it never will be! Good people die young. People suffer. People get sick. Everyone here is going to go through pain. That's reality. You can try to go through this pain yourself and be miserable. Or you can believe in the God who wants a relationship with you. It says, "In the world you will have trouble, but be confident, because I have overcome the world." Jesus Christ invites you and me today to

spend time with Him and get to know Him and to know that you know that you know that Christ is alive.

And so then I started to think. Here I am speaking to these men yesterday, and I had spoken there four years ago and they asked me to come back – I have no idea why, because all I do is beat them up. And so I sat there and I said, “How many of you were here the last time that I spoke,” and about 80% of them raised their hand. And I said to them, “You poor men! Why did you want me back? You know I’m just going to beat you now for the next hour.” And I said, “Let me see how many of you brought your Bibles.” And so last time I know I spoke about that, and I sat there and maybe 20% raised their hands. And I said, “You know, let me just give you all a hint. I am wasting my time with you. I am wasting my time and you’re wasting your time. If you just came to see Fr. Larry Richards because he’s gonna make you laugh, and he’s gonna challenge you and he’s gonna make you feel bad don’t do it! Don’t waste my time of Gods! I told you four years ago if you want to come to know Jesus Christ what are you going to have to do? Read the word of God every day. To bring the sword, don’t try to do life without God’s word in your hand. And you didn’t even bring the Bible. Now how many of you, I’m wondering, actually read the Bible every day? Or am I just wasting my life here? Do you know Christ? That’s the point!”

And I said, just like I said to this kid on Friday and the other guy and his wife yesterday, and these men who I’ve spoken to before and just as I’ve spoken to you, now some of you ten years. You’ve got to do as I tell you. Like that kid, I said, “Never once, I’ve told you a thousand times, son, you’re going to have to take 24 hours and you’re going to have to sit there and go before Jesus and say, ‘Jesus, if You’re real, I want to know You.’ I’ve told you a thousand times you’re going to have to sit there if you want to know Jesus.” Because he said, “I don’t think I’ll ever know Jesus.” I said, “It’s never gonna happen unless you decide to go and spend an hour a week with Him alone, just you and Jesus. It’s never gonna happen. You didn’t fall in love with your wife, it’d never happen if you didn’t spend time with her. You’re never going to know Jesus and know everything is going to be okay unless you spend time with Him. It just is impossible, son. No relationship, you can’t be in any relationship without saying, ‘You’re worth my time and energy.’ You just can’t go to Mass on Sunday and say that you’re a follower of Jesus Christ – that’s a lie!” If this is all you do, you are a liar! You are not a

follower of Jesus Christ. You're not a disciple, because you're just going through the motions of going to Church. This isn't enough.

Jesus wants you and Him to be in intimacy. He wants you and Him every day - if you're going to be able to deal with all the garbage of life, if you want to be able to face death without fear - you might get cancer, someone in your family might die - if you want to deal with that, the only way it's gonna happen is when you come to know Jesus more than you know anybody else. And that will never happen unless you start giving Him time in your life. It'll never happen. You'll sit there and say, "Well I wonder." Well wondering ain't gonna do it. Do you know that you know that you know? Would you be willing to give everything up for Christ? Do you know him that intimately? And the only way that's going to happen is, John Paul II says when he was talking in his encyclical on evangelization he said there's three things you've got to do to become a disciple of Christ: you've got to convert - conversion, communion, and mission. Conversion, communion, and mission. That's what's happening today in the Gospel. Jesus invites these men to come and follow Him. And what He's asking them to do is what? Spend time with Him. To come and stop doing things your own way.

Now again, that means that you're going to have to sit there any say, "Well this is the way I do things, Father." Well, I'm just supposed to stop because this is the way you do things? I'm telling you you've got to do more. Don't you hate the priest that tells you that? Don't you hate it when you come and you just had a hard week and everything else and the priest looks at you and says, "It's time to change." "Father you tell me every week I've got to change." Yea, when's it going to start working? When's it going to start sinking in? When are you going to decide yes, it's time? I'm going to sign up for an hour a week to be with Christ alone. I'm going to commit myself to daily prayer and reading of the Word of God. I'm going to do it, because the only thing I do is make excuses about why I can't. Why Fr. Larry's out of touch. Well God's calling you to repent, to convert, to stop doing it your way and start doing it His.

Then He calls you and I to that communion. So when He says, "Come follow Me" to the apostles He says, "Stop doing what you're doing." What did they do? They left everything and spent time with Jesus. Have you left everything? Everything! They left their livelihood! They gave up the nets right then and there. They left everything to follow Jesus, to spend time with Jesus. Nothing else was more important than spending time with Jesus. And then as they spent time with Him that communion.

The only way I can tell you that I have no fear if I'm going to die today, or if the Lord came in or some nut came and was going to blow my brains out is because of all the time I've spent with Christ throughout these years. Since I was seventeen spent an hour a day with Him. I don't hope Jesus is God. I don't hope that I'm not wrong. I know I'm not. I just know it. I didn't waste my time at three to four in the morning the other day. And I told the men there, I said, "Gentlemen, all you men here stop making your damn excuses." I just said it, I swore. (I can do that with men, sorry for the kids here) I said, "Stop it. I want you to give an hour a week to God in the middle of the night. Just stop it. And I want you to start doing that with the adoration chapels up here. Just stop doing it your way and do it." "Father, I'll be tired." "Well suck it up and be a man." Clapping, can you imagine? Why do I get standing ovations for that? Why? Because men want to be challenged. Don't you? We want to sit there any be more! We want to go, and you know what you've got to do.

Jesus is calling you and me to that communion, that intimacy. That means you're going to have to take time out of your week besides Sunday and be with Jesus. Or you're going to be a pagan that goes to Church only once a week. And the third thing He does is He calls you and me to mission is what the Holy Father says. Conversion – stop doing it your way do it God's. Communion – spend time with Him as His disciple. And then mission. Because you don't only come to Jesus of course. It doesn't say, Jesus says when He says, "Come follow Me." He says, "Come follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." So when you come and be in a relationship with Jesus Christ, it's not just about you any more. It's about you going out and bringing others to Him. If someone came to you this week and said, "I don't believe any of this garbage" what would you say to them? Would you try to argue with them? Or would you say look in my eyes – do you see Jesus Christ? He's alive inside of me, and He wants you to know Him. But it's going to cost you. You're going to have to spend time with Him. You're going to have to be with Him. You cannot come to know Him unless He's worth your time.

So today let's all of us decide. Jesus looks at you and me and says, "Come follow Me." What's your answer? Will you come and spend time with Jesus Christ? May each of you know His love today and forever, Amen.