

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle B

October 11, 2009

Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning. Today in the Gospel Jesus hits us hard, but He hits us in love. Here is a guy who comes before God, the rich young man and he wants to prove, “what do I have to do to go to heaven?” ‘Oh you know the commandments.” “I have kept all of these.” You know I get this all of the time when I go around and get my penance talk and a good examination of conscience. “Yeah Father, I am a good person. I don’t do much.” And I just want to shake them. “Are you kidding me?” Everybody here does plenty, let me give you a hint, everybody here. Not one of us can earn heaven. Not one of us if we stand before God and we say, “Why should you let me into heaven?” not one of us could say, “Well I was a good person.” Not one of us could say, “Well, I did all of these good things.” Not one of us could say, “Well, I went to church every week.” Not one of us could say, “Well I listened to Fr. Larry Richards on Sundays.” He’ll say, “You already went to hell. Come right to heaven. It is fine.” The reality is not one of us deserve it, not one. And if you deserve it, you think you deserve it, you are very, very far from God. You are filled with spiritual pride because this goes with the next line. This is what this guy was, he was filled with spiritual pride. Now Jesus looks at him and says, “Okay, you want to know. You lack one thing. Go sell all that you own and then come follow Me. Then you will have treasure in heaven” And he walked away sad. Can you imagine?

How about us? Do we fully surrender our life to Christ? What if Christ asked you today, today, this hour, “Okay, I want your family. I am going to take them from you. I want your house. I want that nice car you drive. I want your bank account. I want everything from you.” Would you walk away sad or would you surrender it all? See, that is the call. Going to Mass on Sunday, calling yourself a Catholic Christian, doing all of the commandments does not make us truly His followers. To be His follower we need to surrender everything. It is having our hands open saying, “God, give what you want, take what you want. I belong to you.” You love me more than I love myself. So I trust You.” In the longer version of this Gospel, Peter comes before God and he says, “Lord, we have given up everything for You. We have done it all.” Jesus looks at him and says, “Do you think you can out give God in generosity?” He doesn’t use those words but He says, “Anyone who has left everything for Me, will get all kinds of things on earth many times over besides eternal life,” Then there is that one little line, “and persecution.” The call first of all is, are you willing to give up everything for the Lord?

I use to have a poster in my room, and someone asked for it so they got it. What happened is it sat there and it said, “Sometimes I think I have fully surrendered and then He asks me for something I don’t want to give up. “ Sometimes I think I have fully surrendered and then He asks me for something I am not willing to give up. Is there anything in our life we are not willing to give up? If you say, “Well Father it is kind of hard. I don’t even like this talk.” I want you to take a look at that beautifully new painted crucifix in front of you on that altar. God the Father is there with His Son. And God the Father gave everything for you. Jesus on the cross looks at you and says, “I have given everything for you.” For love to be love, we need to give everything to Him. Are you willing? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.