

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time - Cycle B

November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Fr. Larry Richards

We are in the midst of another TEC retreat weekend. I have been talking a lot there. I was at the mission in Lancaster. When I was in Lancaster, great people but there a lot of things that went wrong so I came back frazzled. Then we went right on to this retreat and usually every retreat, the TEC retreats are the greatest things, I have a few people who, a couple of the girls are trying to push my buttons. And they are succeeding. So last night I had one of my meltdowns so we will see what happens with that. But anyway as we reflect on life right now the big movie is 2012 if you saw it. I haven't seen it but it has been advertised all over. If you have been watching the Discovery Channel, The History Channel, The SciFi Channel all of them have programs on 2012, about the world is going to end. Aren't you excited? I love Fr. Benedict Groeschel when people talk about the world ending and he always says, "Promises, promises." Some people get all excited, "What if the world ends?" It is suppose to end a couple of days before Christmas in 2012 so we got like what, three years right before we decorate everything is all going away anyway. We might as well not decorate that Christmas. But remember Y2K when we all got together and we prayed the world is going to end? Oh, I think so Father. The people who first put out my tapes, The Mary Foundation, Bud McFarland was so convinced the world was going to end he went and built a shelter up in the middle of nowhere and he built all of this stuff. He got all of these things preparing for the end of the world. Everybody is getting ready cause all of this stuff is going to happen.

Once I was in Union City and however many years ago, I was at a prayer meeting. In the middle of a prayer meeting a bunch of people praising God and everything else, there was something that happened, I can't even remember what it was now, some kind of war, or someone attacked us, I forget what it was. Everybody in the room started screaming, "The world is going to end. The world is going to end." Everybody just went nuts and I just thought boy this praying really helps us here. Everybody is going nuts if the world ends. If the world was to end today we should be ecstatic about it people. You know when you say the Our Father today you are asking for the world to end today. That is what you are praying for. As we are preparing for the end of the Church year we do that every day. Our Father who are in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Very clearly in the early Church they knew explicitly what that meant. Jesus come back, set up Your kingdom, end the world, it is time. And we as a church have been praying for the end of the world for two thousand years. That is what we hope for. Again what is the end of the world, it is the end of pain, the end of suffering, the end of death, the end of sin, the end of war, the end of hatred. Who doesn't want the world to end. Then it is the beginning of life, the beginning of peace, the beginning of joy, the beginning of eternity, right. So we have got to have that perspective on life. If not we go around afraid of everything. When something happens and we see a new thing on Discovery we go out of our mind. Or we watch a movie, what if it is to happen? So what? When did does the world end for you, when you die. The world ended. It is over. So what we have got to be doing is we have got to be people that just trust in the Lord.

That is why it must go way beyond what we do at church. You have got to have that foundation. In my daily life I say, "Lord, I am totally out of control." For me it happens when I realize that I don't have power over my next breath. I just don't have that power. God could take my next breath from me right now. Boom, okay it is over. I could live in fear and so could you that we can't even take our next breath

without God. Or we can look at that reality at this very moment God has given you and me mouth to mouth resuscitation to keep me alive. That God never leaves me. That God never leaves you. At this very moment for you to breathe in, God has got to breathe out. For you to breathe out, God has got to breathe in. He keeps his face over your face always and breathes in life to you and to me. He promised us that He would never let us go. He never promised us that He would take away the tribulation. Doesn't say that today in the readings He said there will be great tribulation. He doesn't promise the tribulation will be taken away. But He does promise that we will get through it. That He will never let us go and that everything will be fine if we trust Him.

Do you ever sit there and think about if the world ends in our time, and I really do hope, I really, really do hope, that the world ends in our time because, and for a selfish reason, because Jesus said, "There would be one generation that would never see death." So if Christ comes today those of us don't have to die we just get transformed. Wouldn't you rather do it that way? I think I would myself. I don't want to go through the whole process of everybody standing around, Father is dying, probably by that time Monsignor is dying. He is going around, he has his red robes on and everything else. Let's pray for Monsignor, whatever it is. I would rather not do that. I would rather Jesus just come home today and say, "Okay, come on. Are you coming?" "I am coming Lord." You do realize it is going to be the same face of Jesus. Some people when they see the face of Jesus they are going to be smiling from ear to ear because they have seen His face. They know His face, they know who is coming and they will be ecstatic. Other people when they see the face of Christ are going to scream, are going to cry, are going to run. Same face of Jesus, the difference is whether we know Him or whether we don't. Whether we trust in Him and we let Him give us mouth to mouth resuscitation everyday or whether we just go through the motions, go to work and hope I have enough money to buy my car and hope the world does not end in 2012 because I want to buy a new house. I have all of these plans. So we trust in the Lord every day, because again we don't know the day or the hour. So every day could be the day. Every day could be the hour. It does not have to be December 2012. It has to be the day you and I stand before Him and He says, "Okay, it is time. Come home." And when we finally come home, life begins.

I tell you this to give you some kind of hope. When all of the world is talking about tribulation, when all of the world is talking about fear, when all of the world is talking about the end is near, we need to be the people that smile and say I hope so. Be people of hope. To give people that are afraid hope to help them to know, no matter what it is going to be okay. No matter what God will never let us go. No matter what He is going to hold you and me forever. What we have got to do is make sure we are holding on to Him and not holding onto the world. You got it? Get it? Going to live it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.