

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C

June 13th, 2010

Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning. Today the Second Reading is my favorite reading. It is going to be on my gravestone when I die at 125 because the good die young. That I have been crucified with Christ and the life I live now is no longer my own. Christ lives inside of me. I still live my human life, yes, but it is a life of faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave His life for me. This is the crux of the Gospel. That we who are followers of Jesus don't live our own lives anymore. We surrender our lives completely to Christ and Christ lives His life through us. It is not about being a good person. It is not about going to church on Sunday. It is not about doing all of the right things. It is about dying and letting Jesus Christ to take control of your life. You can go to Mass every day. You can be a priest. You can be a nun and not truly have died and give your life to Christ. You can do all of the right things but what Christ looks for from you and me is the total surrender of our hearts and our lives, to let Him take full control.

And it begins by Christ's decree by that word called repentance. The first word ever out of Jesus' mouth was repent. And that is what He is saying today to King David. Now think about David. David was a murderer, a rapist, an adulterer, you fill in the blank. Everything bad about David could be said about David would be true. He was. And yet today when he was confronted with his sin he didn't make excuses. He didn't say no, no, no. Who are you to judge me? He says, "I have sinned." He acknowledged his sin and he confessed his sin. That is why the murderer David is St. David. Many churches throughout the world are named after St. David. All of the psalms were written by St. David, were given traditionally to St. David. So everything, King David became one of our greatest saints. And he became the great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, grandfather of Jesus Christ, Himself. So from his loins came Christ in His humanity. And so you think it all began with David, is the same place it begins with us, when we acknowledge we are sinful people. We acknowledge we like to do things our way instead of God's way. We acknowledge whatever it is our sin in our lives.

You know the next Mass will be done by Fr. Michael. Fr. Michael Polinek, who of course has been with us since the beginning, his conversion, his walk with us through the whole thing. It is really freaking me out because Michael I have known of course since he was young and he has just been assigned to Fr. Rich Toohey. Fr. Rich Toohey was one of my kids when he was young. Walked out of one of my retreats, walked into my youth group and I would always tell him to be a priest. Fr. Rich is the pastor of Fr. Michael. I am getting very old. It is freaking me out. It is going to be a great thing for these two. As we were at ordination, and it was a wonderful ordination, I was by God's grace, Michael asked me to vest him. It is a great thing to vest a newly ordained priest, but the homily from the ordination got me the most. It was talking to the priests, the Bishop gave his homily which is good, but then he always says listen to the teaching of the Church and he gives the little homily suggested in the ordo for the newly ordained. One of the things it says to the priests is kill sin in your life. Kill sin in your life. That is the whole thing what it means to be crucified with Christ is we have got to not ever make peace with the sin in our life. We have got to let God kill it. You know C.S. Lewis was a great writer and he wasn't Catholic he was an Episcopalian. He wrote a book called "The Great Divorce." I love one of the stories in The Great Divorce because in the story is a man who is in Purgatory. His whole theology of Purgatory is different than ours. Anyway he is dead and he is in Purgatory because of this demon of lust he has had

his whole life. This little demon of lust, this is true, is this little demon and it sits on his shoulder. This demon has a chain around this man's neck and he pulls it and makes this man do all this horrible things. And the man hates it and he hates himself. He is always crying out to God, "God you have got to help me. You have got to help me get rid of the demon of lust." So anyway God sends an angel to the man. The angel looks at him and says, "What can I do for you?" And the man says, "It is this demon of lust that makes me do all these horrible things. I can't stand it. I am so ashamed. It makes me again and again do these horrible things." The angel looks at him and says, "May I kill it?" "Oh I don't know if you want to kill it. Maybe you could wound it a little bit. You know, take its legs and break it or something." And the angel looked at him and said, "May I kill it?" "Oh it is not very politically correct to kill things. I don't know if you really want to kill it. I don't know about killing it." And the angel said, "May I kill it?" Finally the man said, "Yes, yes, yes you can kill it." And the angel reaches out and he takes the demon of lust and he crushes it and he kills it. And this demon is transformed into a beautiful white stallion. And the man jumps on the stallion and the stallion takes him home to heaven, finally.

God has sent all of us angels. We have a guardian angel every one of us. And the sin we deal with us in our life, the primary purpose of your guardian angel is to get you to heaven. The guardian angel looks at you almost every day and says, "May I kill the sin in your life?" What do you say? Well I don't know. I kind of like my sin. I don't know, maybe if it didn't control me and I controlled it. No, no, no. The only way to deal with sin in your life is to kill it. So will you give God permission in your life today to kill those sins in your life? Some of you think well I don't have that many Father. Oh, you've got the biggest one – you got pride. You are going to hell first, absolutely. If you think you don't have any sins you got the worst one. The closer you are to God the more sinful you know you are. The further away from God you are the less sinful you think you are. If you go into a room and the sun is out, it's a typical Erie day the sun isn't out, but if it was and we were in Florida and the sun comes through the window you can see all of the dust in the room. We are breathing dust right now, billions of particle dusts all around. The more sun there is the more you see it. If the room is darker you can't see much of anything can you, but it is still there. When God's grace is in a soul the more God's presence is there the more the soul knows its own sinfulness. The less the presence of God in a person the less, he thinks or she thinks she is sinful.

So you and I today are first of all called to first acknowledge our sins. Second give God permission to kill the sin in our life and desire it to be killed in our life forever. To be taken out of our life forever. And the third thing that has got to happen is from the Gospel today. The woman was forgiven Jesus said because of her great love. That what finally has to happen is the sins that bind us all of these years, we will only be set free when we love God more than we love sin. It is that simple. You and I stop sinning not because we don't want to go to hell. Again we hear a lot about hell and how we don't want to go there and we don't want to go. If that is the only reason God have mercy on your soul because it is ultimately a selfish act. You are only concerned about yourself and not going to hell. I'll bet you God will be so excited because you are going to be in heaven. You didn't want to really be with Him you were just afraid of going to hell. The final thing that will get you and me out of our sin that is keeps binding us is when we fall more in love with Jesus than we fall in love with our sin. That is a grace and it has to be something we desire. So if you and I are still in our fear because again John says, "Perfect love casts out fear." And for someone who is still afraid love has not yet reached in the letter to John.

So you and I today have to ask God to increase my love for You, God. Increase my love for You. For the last 21 years every time I hold up the Eucharist and the bread and wine become the Body, Blood, Soul

and Divinity of Christ. My exact words to Christ, every time is Jesus increase my love for You and Your people. Jesus increase my love for You and Your people. That everything may be an act of love instead of just going through the motions. May my life become an act of love. Sometimes it is, sometimes it is not. But that has got to be our desire. So today God asks all of you and asks me is we acknowledge our sins. We give Him permission to kill it and we fall more and more in love with God than we fall in love with our sin so we can finally be set free. You got it? Get it? Going to do it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.