

August 23, 2009

21st Sunday Ordinary Time - Cycle B

Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning. Today in the Gospel of course we start, we come to the end of the bread of life discourse which we have dealt with in the Church the last four weeks. And here is the verse of scripture I quote usually when I am doing a mission; it is John 6:66, 6...6...6, the sign of the anti-Christ, "His disciples broke away from Him and would no longer stay in His company." So, the disciples, the ones who follow Jesus, not the pagans, the ones who sat with Him every day; the ones who were there; the ones who proclaim to follow Him, they left Him over the teaching of the Eucharist and because... not only that, He went on with other teachings. And the reason they left Him was why - because "this sort of talk is hard to endure." You know, again, the people that come to Jesus, the disciples who follow Him as long as He tickles their ears, and as long as He tells them they are wonderful and great and glorious.

But then you know even like today in the Second Reading, which I love the Second Reading of course, you do realize there are two options for that Second Reading. The second option is what of course most churches go by because the priests are whimps a lot. Because they don't want to deal with the first part of the Second Reading that says, "wives be subordinate to your husbands." So because priests any more can become very whimpy, they will sit there and use the shorter reading so they don't have to deal with the people who don't like that. Now again yesterday I was at a men's conference in Clarksdale, MS. They had about 100 men there. And Clarksdale, MS is about an hour and a half south of Memphis, there is only 2.9 percent Catholics. Very, very, small minority down there. And so I always, when I am at a men's conference, I always use this reading. And I always sit there and I get them all excited because the men are like, "Yeah!" Because I will say, "Is that what it means?" "Yes, that is what it means." And the guys are like, "Yes, yes, yes. We like you."

You know and so but then again I've used this before here when I do weddings and everything else. That the purpose is wives to serve your husbands, absolutely, positively, but then the purpose of the husbands is to die for their wives. Absolutely. Again, and I told them because there are too many Catholic men, ...Catholics because they need to be beaten, but Protestants and Fundamentalists who believe that this means that you have to obey me. If that is what you think you are a nut-case. You might as well leave the church now. If you think your wife is here to obey you, you are a nut. You got that? Can anybody experience the nuttiness? Is this talk hard to endure? But so many people believe that. That you are here to take care of me and serve me and obey me. Well, then you are not a follower of Jesus Christ. Because this kind of subordination is the way Christ is subordinate to the church and again when you walk into a Catholic church, especially, you see a what? A crucifix. That is the type of power, here is the God of the Universe who leaves heaven and serves you and me and then goes beyond that and then feeds us with His own body and blood and He says, "This is what I want you to do. - husbands, feed your wives with your very being. Give your life for them every day. Give your life for your children. Be a servant." Because if you are not a servant, again, when I was talking to the guys I say, "You know we all want to be great leaders, you want to be a great leader?" "Yes, Father!" "Good

gentlemen.” And to be a good leader you need to be a good what? Follower. You have to be a servant of Christ. You have to be a servant of your family. And in your servant-hood, you are giving your life for Christ and your family will make you the greatest leader of your family. And it is not just for the men of course, it is for the women. That that is the way you lead, by laying your life down. And so what has to happen.

You know I love how this goes back to the First Reading. I love when I walk into houses and sometimes it is sad because you see this in a lot of Protestant houses, but I don't see it in a lot of Catholic houses. You know, here is Joshua. Now Joshua of course is there in the First Reading. Moses is dead. And all the Commandments have been given and not just the Ten Commandments but all the Commandments of Leviticus, all these things are out there. And so you know Joshua just has had it. And he goes and calls all the assembly together and says, “Listen, choose now. Choose. If you want to serve the Balaam and those other gods, go for it. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” And so often, they even have door markers that say that, you know. Or if you walk into a house and it is the first thing you see when you walk into someone's house, “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” We come and explicitly say this is what this house does. This is what this family does. We serve, “as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” And of course the way you serve the Lord is by serving each other. By giving your life.

So, I encourage those who don't have that to either print it or you go online and buy one. You go and buy a nice door knocker that says it. You get a nice plaque that has it. You go on your computer and you make something fancy. You put it on your front door. You put it in your entrance. You put it in a picture frame and put it on one of those things. So as soon as someone walks in your house, they know what you belong to. “As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” And will prove that we serve the Lord by serving each other. You see, this kind of talk is hard to endure. Why, because it will cost you your life every day. Are you willing to die for God? Are you willing to die for your wife? Are you willing to die for your husband? Then prove it by serving them every day. Got it? Get it? Going to live? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.