

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 10, 2010

Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning. Today the readings as we said in the beginning of Mass, have to do with healing and thanksgiving. Both of them are there but we will be dealing with thanksgiving in a few weeks when it comes. It is only a month away. Isn't that freaky, Thanksgiving is coming. We will talk about that then. I want to focus on healing today. The God of the universe is the God of love and the God of love always wants to bring healing to us. This is God's will for us. God is not an Ogre. God is not sitting up in heaven watching us suffer and kind of enjoying it. God is a God of love. So when you and I come and approach this God we have got to have this confidence in this God who loves us, wants to heal us, and wants to bring us wholeness as He did in the First Reading, as He did to the ten lepers today in the Gospel. When I do a Parish Mission the last night is dedicated to healing. I don't think a lot of people really believe in God's power to heal. What I tell them is we have got to believe this. We are focusing on our own healing today. First of all we have got to ask for it. Second of all we have got to believe in it and then we have got to receive it. And then four we have got to make sure we thank God for it.

The first thing we have got to do of course is ask for it. We have got to have the right attitude when we are asking for healing. We are not just talking about physical healing. We are talking about mental healing, spiritual healing; all of us have been hurt. There isn't one of us here that have part of our hearts or our lives that is not in need of healing. We all have it. We need to present it to God and the reason we present these things to God is that He can heal us. But God isn't interested in healing us to perpetuate our selfishness. Some people ask for healing for themselves only so that they can have a longer retirement or that they can be happier and they can live life their own way. And God isn't interested in just sitting there and perpetuating your own selfishness. The reason God heals us is so we can do His will. As we have been talking about the last couple of weeks that in our lives we have got to come to God and really seek His will in our daily life and want to do His will every day. One of the first persons that Jesus healed in His public ministry was who? Peter's mother in law, correct? Peter's mother in law and Peter was awfully excited about that was he not? Like, "Sure thanks Jesus starting with my mother-in-law. I thought I was going to get rid of her and now you are bringing her healing." But after she was healed what did she do, she served. The reason God healed her is He could continue to use His will through her and bring service to others. When we seek healing from God that has got to be the reason we are seeking it. So that I can continue to do His will and serve Him through others. When I ask God for any kind of healing I have got to make sure my intention is not a selfish intention. But its intention is seeking God's will in my life.

The second thing you and I have got to do of course is we have got to believe that God can heal us. When I am doing a parish mission and I talk that night, the two things are going to keep you from being healed tonight. The first thing is you don't believe it you are right. If you don't have the power and believe that God can do anything. And you are right. And I don't believe most Catholics do. I have told the story where years ago I when I was ordained about 5 years and was doing healing ministry and I was down in Meadville, Pennsylvania at St. Agatha's. This husband and wife came to get prayed over and he

was type 1 Diabetic. I am type 2 Diabetic. Here he was and we prayed over him and he was healed. So his sugar drops down where it should be and he using less and less insulin and went to the doctor and the doctor said, "Make sure you are focusing and taking your insulin." But he didn't need the insulin after a while. And after six months he went back to the doctors and the doctor signed an affidavit saying that this man was totally cured of diabetes. So then him and his wife came up to St. Luke's when I was over at St. Luke's. I was the assistant there. So they rang the doorbell and I wasn't there so they talked to the Monsignor there. They said, "Monsignor, can we talk to Father Larry." He said, "Well he is not here right now." Surprise, aren't you. He said, "What do you want him for? Can I help you?" "Well he prayed over us six months ago over my husband and he was cured of his diabetes. We wanted to show him the affidavit from the doctor." And the monsignor said, "Well let me see that." And he said, "Okay I will tell him." So the next day we are at dinner and monsignor looks at me and he says to me, "Larry, a couple came yesterday and they were telling about how he was healed of diabetes from when you were down at St. Agatha's." I said, "Oh, praise God," and I kept on eating. "No Larry, you don't understand. He was really healed." I said, "Oh yeah. Don't you believe that God can heal?" And see most people do not. "Well God might want to heal but He doesn't want to." Come on! If God can't heal like I have said it before I am leaving the priesthood, going to the Bahamas and I am going to have fun with 10, 21-year olds women. Ten! Ten just in case you are wondering. I love to shock people. All of these people are saying, "I am going to die. Did he just say that?" Yes, Father just said that. But the reality, am I going anywhere? No. Why? Because God can heal. That is the point. That is the point that the God of the Universe can heal, does heal and He wants to heal. You have got to believe it.

The second thing that I say to these people the last night of the mission, the second thing that will stop you from being healed by Almighty God is an unforgiving heart. If there is anyone in your life you have not forgiven then God cannot heal you. You have bound Him from healing you. That is why so many walked around in their whole life and they have these wounds in them. We all have the wounds. When you have a toothache you are focused only on yourself. The devil likes to poke you spiritual wound so to keep you focused on yourself. You walk around all about your pain. You walk around depressed. You walk around, "Oh my life stinks," because you keep focusing on your pain and all of the people who have hurt you. Let me give you a hint. Everybody single one of us can come up here and tell about the people who have hurt us in our lives. True? We can either stay where we are and stay in our pain and stay miserable or we can forgive them and experience healing in our own lives today. It is not an option. This isn't something that if you have the chance you can forgive the person. I am not saying that at all. I am saying you must forgive this person or be damned. Right? That if you don't forgive someone in your life, if you were to die right now if there are some people you haven't forgiven automatically it is damnation. Automatically you will be damned. Aren't you excited about that? Thank you Father for telling me that. I am helping you out here is what I am trying to do. If you don't buy that from me today when you say the Lord's Prayer, what will we say? And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. That is what God says. That is what you pray every time you pray. God you forgive me as I forgive others. That is what you are praying today, right. In case you didn't get that again as Jesus continues in the book of Matthew, He explains that prayer. "If you forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you." I have talked about this not too long ago. "If you do not forgive others neither will your Father forgive you." That is what Christ says.

It is an act of the will. So today as you sit in front of the Blessed Sacrament this is what you have to do to experience healing today at this very Mass. You look at Jesus who is here, I will give you a chance to do at Communion, and in your heart when you go back, you ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you anyone in your life you have held resentment against, that you have not forgiven, that you keep hating them in your heart and this is what you do. You say, "Jesus, today, at this moment I forgive them." And I ask you now to forgive them also." As soon as you do that it is an act of the will. You will be set free. Now the feelings don't come right away. You might still have in your heart these feelings against this person. Feelings have nothing to do with forgiveness. Forgiveness is an act of the will. If you don't forgive them then you continue to be a victim for the rest of your life. And you will continue to be focused on self, your pain and you will walk around moping because you have been hurt in life like we all have. You are going to hold on to it and hold on to that pain and hold onto it real tight. But you will never have peace or happiness in your heart because you will continue to be a victim from that person who hurt you or persons who hurt you forever. You want to live that kind of life? You are welcome to and you can. Or today you can say, "Lord, I forgive them and I ask You to forgive them." Then Christ will heal you and forgive you.

Now you come to the last part once you experience that mercy of God then we are not focused on ourselves anymore then we can have this attitude of gratitude because we are always focused on thanksgiving to God because I have been set free from my pain that I have clung to all of my life. Today it is time for a new beginning. Today it is time for a new life. It all begins when you ask God for healing. And it continues when you believe He can do that. Then you receive it by setting other people free by you forgiving them. Then when God gives you this healing then you come and live a life of thanksgiving. You got it? Get it? Going to do it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.