

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C  
October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning. Are you ready? I was in Indianapolis yesterday and I had to speak twice. They had me speaking last also and then I had to do Benediction. So I didn't get out of Indianapolis, downtown Indianapolis until after 5 o'clock in the afternoon. So I am driving back and I got home about midnight last night and I got up early this morning. I have got to go back on the road again and head back to Chicago for another Parish Mission this week. They told me, "Father are you out of your mind?" It is only an hour and a half from Indianapolis to where I was going to go. I said, "No, I have got to go back to so that I can be at the parish on Sunday because people love to talk about the pastor when he is not around and saying he doesn't like this, doesn't like that. Doesn't love us, doesn't care for us. So I specifically come back here just to be here. Now that is sometimes good and that is sometimes bad. Because I am all out of sorts and I have to get back in the car. But that is not your problem. That is my problem. This is the reality, that when God looks at you and me today and He says, "We need to be praying always," that is what we got to be doing. We have got to be people of prayer. Think about how busy our lives are. We are all very busy with the jobs we do. Even if you are just taking care of, and it is not just taking care of five kids or three kids, and you are a person at home, it is a very busy life. That is why it is so, so, so, so important that when we walk in these doors this becomes a sanctuary of prayer. For an hour of your life a week that you just put everything aside and you don't focus on anybody else, you just enter in to the sanctuary to pray to Almighty God. And that is what I have got to make this church more than anything else. If we are a great place where we all get together and we have a fine time together then we should just stop saying Mass. We can just have fellowship all of the time. You can all go next store, get together once a week, yak with each other, have a fine time and then go home. This must be a place of prayer. We come and we talk with each other. I know we haven't seen each other that is why we do it in fellowship afterwards or we do it in the vestibule before.

I don't know what I have got to do to make sure that the moment you walk through those doors in the vestibule this becomes the sanctuary where you encounter the living God who is right here waiting for you and me. He says, "What do you want to say to Me? What do you want to say to Me?" And then He says, "Now will you listen to Me? Can I speak to you? Can I build you up? Can I tell you what you need to do? Can I tell you what has to happen when you leave this place today?" No matter what we do this must become the sanctuary of our lives. That we enter into here or we enter in next door into our Adoration Chapel into the very presence of God. And what is on the wall when you go into the sanctuary? Psalm 46, verse ten which is "Be Still." I purposely put that there, you know, to tell everybody. Maybe we should put two of them here so that when you come into this church you become still. "Be still and know that I am God." So we enter into here and become still and we know that we are in the very presence of God. Think about what is happening this very moment. All the angels and saints are falling down on their faces before God who is in that tabernacle and they are worshipping Him. When you and I enter into the sanctuary we must do the same.

So the first thing we have got to do is make sure that we are committed to our prayer time, that we know when the time is to pray. Jesus tell us that the time to pray is, in today's Gospel, that the time to pray is "always." So we become these people who are people of prayer. So that every day we have that committed time. Every day we are doing things. Then He tells us what to pray. In the Second Reading it tells us what is the great instrument of helping you to pray and what is that in the Second Reading today? Scripture, thank you. Scripture is that instrument where we can best pray. It is very useful. You and I should have always around us, our Bible, so that we can encounter Jesus there and to do that every day. To have an encounter with the living Lord in His word so that He can instruct us, He can teach us, He can reprimand us when we need reprimanded, so that we can come into His presence and then live His will in our lives. We then go to the First Reading and here is an example of petitionary prayer, of intercessory prayer. Here is Moses and there is a battle going on. He is praying for the people. And as he is praying for the people, the people are winning because He is praying. But then he gets tired and as he gets tired he starts to fall down. His arms start to fall. When he stops praying then the people start to lose.

That is why me as the pastor, my number one job for you is that I intercede for you every day. And I promise you, before Almighty God, that at least twice a day I intercede for you. Every day I say the rosary for you. Every day I stand before the Father and I intercede for you and for your needs. I am not a perfect person in any other way but I do pray for you and I have prayed for you for all these years. But it isn't enough for me to be praying for you now is it? Say, "No Father. No Father." You have got to be doing what, praying for me. You have got to be lifting up my hands when I am going out to Indianapolis. When I go to St. John, Indiana this week. You have got to be making sure that if I pray for you every day and I am trying to do the best I can, some days good, some days not good, but I am lifting up my hands. I am lifting up my heart before the Father for your intercessions. So when I am on the road especially that you are interceding for me at least twice a day. That every day, even though you hate my guts, you say, "I hate him. You know that God. I cannot take him and his moods. I just can't take him. But, I will pray for him today. Lord, help him. Help him be an instrument." What you do then is you get under the hands of Moses here and you lift them up so when I am praying for you and you are praying for me, that together we are doing the will of God. Together, imperfectly, but we are interceding, we are praying always to the Father for each other. That we can do the will of the Father.

That is the most important thing, I think, because sometimes we use prayer just for ourselves when prayer needs to be intercessory. As I have talked about not so long ago, what is Jesus Christ doing at this very moment? He is interceding for us. That is what it says in Hebrews. That Christ always does intercession. So if you are looking at Jesus right now, and you think, "I wonder what Jesus is doing?" He is praying for you. So when we pray for others that is what we do. In the Church when we come together and we pray whether it is the rosary, so you say the rosary before this mass what you are doing is you are interceding for the Church. When a priest says the Office of Readings every day, well sometimes I don't really care to pray the Office, why, because it is the same prayers, the same psalms, over and over. One hundred and fifty psalms I say every four weeks. That's what happens. We must do that. And sometimes as I am praying them I am thinking, "Boy, I don't get this psalm right now because with a perfect hate, I hate psalm 138 or 139." I go through these phases where I don't feel that right

now. Sometimes I do feel that. So why do I do this, because my job as a priest is to intercede for the Church and for the world and for you.

All of us are called to be this intercessory people that we intercede for each other. That we pray for each other. When people come in they are put on our prayer list and they are prayed for. When you go over to our Adoration Chapel in there on the bottom of course is all of the prayers of the people. When I go and do a mission, like this week, I am going to ask the people of course to write petitions on the cards. Then we take those cards and we place them before the Blessed Sacrament. I always make a promise to them that for one month they will be placed there and for every hour while a person is in there they will be praying for their intentions. Because now we are all doing something for people we never met before. We are interceding for them and their prayers. We become like Moses. We become like the Saints of old that are Saints today. We make it our job to be people of prayer, to be people of intercession.

If you don't know what to pray for there are lots of prayers. You can take them out of the basket and start going through them. You should see how the people are suffering. How their hearts are broken. When you become an intercessor you become an instrument of healing to them. When you and I intercede for somebody it is like we place ourselves over them and the grace of God which is so powerful is focused through us and we set those people on fire or healing. There are times we need to be great intercessors. Every day if you can't think of things to pray for there are lots right in that chapel. Did you ever want to see something you want to pray for? When you go in there instead of just writing the intention before the God of the universe in the book of intentions go through that book and pray for some of those intentions. You will see how every one of us here all are weak, all have needs, all need to be doing something. There is always something we need to be praying about. And when we pray we lift up the body, we build up the body, we bring healing, and we bring protection.

So, today the command of God is clear, pray always. Be intercessors. We do that 24 hours here in this church in the Perpetual Adoration. I am so blessed and I am so grateful that we do. But we need to be sure that this is part of our daily prayer life. That every day I am not just praying for myself and my needs but I am lifting up others in intercession. You got it? Get it? Going to do it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.