

## Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 14, 2010

Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning. I wanted to preach on the Second Reading today. I had all kinds of things prepared about that reading but the Lord won't let me. So I have to preach on the Gospel. So today we begin with Jesus talking about, "You had better get ready. You see this beautiful Temple?" You can look around and see a beautiful Temple here too. He said, "One day it is not going to be here. One day there will not be a stone left upon the stone." And that happened in the Temple in His day about fifty years later when a Temple destroyed and it will happen in our time. Someday this church will not exist anymore. It is just a reality no matter how much time and energy and what we put into the things of this earth they are all passing away. So there are three things we need to focus on I believe as to what the Lord is saying to us. The first thing we have to do is be prepared, be ready. The second thing we have got to do is trust. And then the third thing we are going to have to do is persevere. So let us look at each of these.

The first thing is we have got to know that this world is not home that we're just passing through. Everything that we cling to will all one day be gone. So we live our lives in such a way. I also believe in dealing with all of the Men's Conferences, I really think that the reason the Lord has raised up men in the Catholic Church is because a great persecution is coming. Within the next 10 to 20 years there is going to be great tribulation, great turmoil. That is why I really believe the Lord letting the whimpy men who have been doing their own little thing throughout their lives, just raising them up and saying, "Listen, the time is coming and you are going to have to defend. You are going to have to stand up for what is right. You are going to have to be on the front lines. That is what I preach at every Men's Conference I go to. I say to them, "Is get ready." And everybody says, "Oh Father, that is kind of a doomsday type thing." I don't think it is a doomsday thing. I am not saying be afraid, no, no, no. We are going to get to that next. I am saying be ready.

If you ever read the book, *Tortured For Christ*, it talks about this pastor who was put in a concentration camp and he says, "That day was just like any other day. We were sitting there, we just got done with Mass, we just had breakfast, we were all talking and all of the sudden the Germans came in and took over. That fast. Everything was fine, everything was typical then all of the sudden everything changed by that afternoon. So what we have got to do is be people that are ready for anything. But in that, when we are being ready, when we realize, "Okay these things are going to happen. Christ told us these things are going to happen", we don't go nuts. See that is what happens way too often. Years ago, well it has to about 30 years ago almost now, I was in Union City with Fr. Peterson and they use to have a weekly Charismatic Group. I use to go every week with them and Fr. Peterson wasn't there one night, I will never forget. The one Sister was there that played, I forget her name, Sr. Ignatius, she play the same music. She was great. Anyway, someone came in and something happened, a war broke out or we attacked somebody or whatever. Well at this prayer meeting it was utter chaos. AHHH the world is ending. And I just thought, "Boy these are the people who are supposed to be close to the Lord and they going nuts because the world is going to end." I thought, "What is with this?"

Fr. Benedict Groeschel has this saying for those people who say, “you know the world is coming to an end or the world is going to end today” and he says, “Promises, promises.” Promises, promises. Every day when we say the Lord’s Prayer we are asking for the world to end are we not? Your kingdom come means okay Lord, come on it is time. Let us end death. Let’s end war. Let’s end suffering. Let’s end cancer. Let’s end all of the garbage and let us begin again with You in eternity. That is what we pray for. Every week we say it He will come again. That is what we are praying for. That is what we are hoping for. That is what we are longing for. If we found out today the world was going to end tonight, you would be like, “Yeah Jesus . Let’s get excited.” St. Francis, the story is, one day he was hoeing his garden and as he was hoeing his garden someone came up to him and says, “St. Francis what would you do if you found out in an hour you were going to die?” And Francis said, “I would keep hoeing my garden.” Because that was God’s will for him. He had to trust that no matter what the future brings whether there are great wars, whether there are tribulations, whether all of these things happen, it is okay because this world isn’t our home. But we have got to be ready and if the church falls down it is okay. This beautiful building is not the Church, now is it? We are. And we persevere. And no matter what happens we have got to be ready, but in the midst of it we have got to be people who trust God.

My greatest devotion and hopefully for a lot of us, is the Divine Mercy Devotion. Whenever I get crazy, the last thing I do when I get on a plane and I have been on a plane so many times these last two weeks it is unbelievable, the thing that I say more than anything else and it gives me great joy and a pill too is, “Jesus I trust in thee.” The last thing I say when I am done with my prayers, and I bless every plane in the United States. Every plane has been blessed by me now, let me just give you a hint. I go in and I do the whole blessing, every single plane. But at the end of it, it is Jesus I trust in you then I usually take a nap and sleep. So the reality is we have got to have this trust in Christ. That no matter what it is going to be okay. And Jesus will give us whatever we need when that time comes to deal with whoever we need to deal with. “Don’t you get your defense ready I myself will give you words that no one will ever be able to refute.” So when all of this stuff happens, we don’t go crazy, we trust. God, Himself, will speak through us and in us. And then it says, don’t you just hate this line, “You will be hated by all on account of my name.” You won’t be hated by all because of who you are, you will be hated by all because you are a Christian.

Now again, we don’t get this, right. But until you put this everything in this world wide perspective, Christianity is only 32% of the world. That is all of the Christians not just Catholics. Christians, all Christians, all denominations, all Protestants, everybody, we are only 32% or 33% of the world. We are the minority in the world. Now here in Erie we don’t get that because everybody is Christian, but in the world we are a minority. So, all will hate us as Jesus says, “Because of My name.” So figure out where the Lord is leading you there. But then He says that what He gives us, His very his very last line, He gives us hope. He says, “By your perseverance, your perseverance, you will gain your life.” Perseverance. This perseverance isn’t something we wait until the end to start doing. Perseverance is something we have got to do now in our daily lives. It is something that when we don’t feel like doing something, when things are going crazy against us we keep persevering.

When I came off the plane on Wednesday, I got home Thursday afternoon at 3 o’clock, We started the TEC retreat of course at 6 o’clock. I was not in a good mood. I know that shocks every one of you, right?

But after going to Reno last week and it took me eleven hours to get to Reno, I did nothing on Thursday, a week ago but be on a plane. Three different planes, all day. And then Sunday to get back here, three different planes to get back here, eleven and a half hours, all day. Then I go there and come back and UGH! Perseverance! It isn't about what you feel like. It isn't about what you do. It is what the Lord wants you to do and your job is to persevere and do His will. And when you and I do that we give life for ourselves but we also beget life in others. This TEC is one of the best TEC's we have ever had. The conversions over there as we are sitting here have been unbelievable. These people are really coming alive in Jesus. And it happens because people keep persevering whether they feel like it. Whether they don't, give their lives whether they feel like it whether they don't to do the will of the Father. And every time you and I persevere to do the will of the Father, that we don't give into our own pettiness and we don't give into our own will. We don't give into our own tiredness. We bring life. We bring refreshment. We bring hope. We bring salvation.

So what we need to be focusing on no matter what the future is going to bring us, is that everything will always be okay because of Jesus. No matter how dark the darkness gets. Have you ever been in a room that gets extremely dark? It is so dark. If you light a candle, if you light a match, if you light a lighter no matter how dark the darkness is, it can never conquer the light. The light is always stronger than the darkness. You and I have the light of Jesus Christ inside of us. We don't focus on ourselves. We don't focus on the situations around us. We focus on Jesus. We bring light in the midst of the darkness. We bring hope in the midst of despair. We bring faith in the midst of doubt. We bring life to a world that doesn't always have life. We, people, are the instruments of God's hope. The instruments of God's life. We need to be prepared. We need to trust and we need to persevere. You got it? Get it? Going to do it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.

