

June 19, 2011

Trinity Sunday

Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning. It is so good to be home. I can't even begin to tell you with all my heart. It has been a week from hell. And I think right now, so don't anybody get close to me, I haven't shaved. I have been on a plane all night, and I got right here after the plane landed, played with my dogs; Rex peed. This is what you've got. But today we celebrate Trinity Sunday. And the gospel is so phenomenal when it focuses on this -that God so loved the world. You know this week I flew into San Francisco, I did a men's conference on Saturday. Then I did a parish mission. Then I did another men's conference up in Portland, Oregon. I don't know what to say. It was just bad. I had so many people the first conference, and I spoke, had a lot of conversions happened, but they called me the anti-Christ. It was just a sad thing because I start getting these emails yesterday and they say, "Father you are one of the few celebrity priests left. We are worried about you." Celebrity priest?

Anyway, but the reality is, "We are praying for you and different things." I know. Okay. And I say this, because for me, this is a true story. I will never go down because of some sexual scandal. It's not my thing. I have problems with intimacy. In case you are wondering. My thing will be I said something stupid. Right? Everybody, don't agree so fast over there! Oh thank you for agreeing so quite easily. But that is exactly what it is. I have to keep saying, I'm not infallible. I say stupid things. It's all a part of the reality. There is only one infallible person in the world today. Who is that? The Pope and only sometimes... (when everything he says is infallible). So we are all open to this. But what I was thinking about is people are out there that are always looking for division. They are always trying to stir division. They are always sitting there thinking, "Okay what isn't right here?" And we bring in this stuff. And so the first night of the mission, because this place, again these are very holy people, good, good people. But one group was an altered traditionalist. They all wear those, remember those things? The doilies, what do you call those things? Mantis? Whatever. So you had those people that had Latin Mass. And those Latin Mass people didn't like those English Mass people because they are in English. And then you have the Mexican community there and so things are in Spanish. The priest was one of the hardest workers you'd ever want to meet in your life and having all of this. My first time speaking I said, "I think this is the very place we are called to have unity but I see great division here."

And it is not just there, it happens here with us too. It happens everywhere. That when people don't pray the way we pray, we judge that. You see, what happens is, when we come to this very Mass and we participate, I don't know if anybody got the first reading today, not the first reading but the opening prayer. According to the opening prayer, where is the Trinity revealed? In us. Isn't that something? It says, your Trinity, the Trinity of God is revealed inside of us. And so is there any division in the Trinity? None. The Trinity is the community of love forever. They never look for division. When Christ came and prayed, He wanted us to be one with the Trinity, He said, "Father may they be one." So the very place of the most expressed is unity on this earth is where? The Mass. And so whenever we sit there and we

start instilling our own views on the Mass, and we start saying, "Well those people who don't speak in tongues or those people who don't pray Latin, or those people who don't kneel when they go to Communion, or those people who don't receive Communion on their tongue, or those people... " we bring sin into the very center of the unity that God has created us for. And so we got to, and I do it, nobody here does it, I know, everybody else just me and these other people I talk to, that we sit there and we bring division to the body because always of our judgment. And, our judgment, we always think is correct, right? We'll follow our laws, and we'll pick the liturgical norms, and we'll look at our canon law, and we will look and say, "See I am right. I am right and everybody else is wrong!" What does that have to do with anything?

When I was called in and they were talking about, "Well, Father, you know," because it was about something sexual I said, but it was a true statement, most people agree. He said, "well maybe you just shouldn't say that kind of stuff." I said, "Well I have to. It is a men's conference. We have to deal with these things, I said." Why is there only people that if I say nothing against the teaching of the church but they don't agree with it then they start putting out things like I was the anti-Christ again. I have gotten those letters before. But I was just so overwhelmed with division when we don't agree with each other. And it is not just out there. I was so oppressed I said to the people the one night, "I have never been oppressed anywhere in my parish missions, ever, except for this parish the way I have been." It's a small parish in the middle of... its almond country. It is where they make all the almonds. There are almond fields everywhere. I said, "I have never experienced this like I have experienced here. You have got to pray for me because I don't know what, with the devil coming at me." And as this was happening, I'm thinking why? why? why? And then I heard confessions. 45 years since the last confession. 38 years since the last confession. People were saved from hell. And so the devil threw everything at me. Everything all of us try to keep division and try not to let healing happen.

And see where this comes from? When we speak division, when we speak judgment, when we talk about why I am right and why everybody else is wrong, and I don't like the way they sing and I don't like the way they pray. And I don't like those people that go to that Mass and I don't like... that is always sin. And it should never be brought into the very center of the holiest of God at the Mass. Did you hear the gospel? When we celebrate Trinity, forever and ever and ever... Trinity is community of love with no division. Never is there division in the Trinity. And because the Holy Spirit, if the Trinity is revealed in us, we must be people that even if we disagree, and that's when I said to the one person, "You know, even if you disagree, you can sit there and say, 'I have dedicated my whole life to preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.'" So you can say, "Father, I don't agree with you with that, can we talk about it?" Yes. "Not Father I think you are arrogant and you are wrong in what you are doing. You are leading people astray." You are a nutcase. You got it? It's just not reality. So I am just as bad as somebody else. But that isn't what God wants.

Did you hear the gospel? What a beautiful gospel, right? It says, "For God so loved the world that He sent his only Son, anyone who believes in Him may not die but have ever lasting life." But the next line, do you get it? "God did not send His son to condemn the world, but to save it." How about us? Are we in this following of Jesus? How often do we condemn the world and condemn those who don't see things our way? How unlike God that is? He did not send his Son to condemn the world but to save it. If we are

members of Jesus Christ, if the Trinity is revealed inside of us then we must not be people who are here to condemn the world. God so loved the world. And we think it is a big thing when we hate the world. You have to hate the sins of the world but you never hate the people of the world. You got that? You see how that has to be manifested if we are going to live the Trinity? That we must sit there and make in our lives and me more than any of you, I know that. Don't sit there and think, well Father you should listen to what you preach. I'm trying. But I am not going to not preach it. God is telling me, He is telling you that we are not here to condemn the world. We are here to save it. And so that has to happen in our individual judgment and the way we sit there and we put things on people when they don't pray the way we do or they don't think the way we do. We condemn them. We think they are evil instead of loving them and helping them come to you. This is the way of the Trinity. And this must be the way of the Trinity's community on earth. And it must be the way each of us decides to live our lives. If God did not come to condemn the world but to save it who are we to condemn the world?

Remember when Jesus and they talk about who is the one who stands before God and condemns us? Satan. So when you and I came before God and condemn others we take the role of Satan in our lives. We are the accusers. That is what the devil does before God. He accuses us. Who saves us in the midst of that accusation? The Paraclete? What's the Paraclete? He is the Holy Spirit that comes to our defense. So here it is people, when we condemn people, when we accuse people, when we do that, we stand in the place of Satan in the Scriptures. When we love people, when we are trying to save people, we are trying to bring unity, we reflect the Trinity who lives inside of us. Now people that does never mean we don't say what is wrong about sin and what sin is. It is a big difference to condemn sin than to condemn the person. And we all do it. I do it. You do it. And we all have to learn to stop. When we come to the depths of our heart and know it is not God's will for you and me to condemn or accuse. Our job is to bring unity in the body. Then we will start having a change of heart and then we will start reflecting the Trinity and the way we live. Got it? Get it? Going to live it? Oh, let us try. May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.