

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 6, 2016
Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning, How are you?
(Audience) Blessed!

We are blessed, especially when we hear the promise of the gospel today. We hear the promise of eternal life. And you know, it's the Sadducees, there's always people wanting to argue with you. I mean people wanted to argue with Jesus. They set this up, right; remember we know the difference when between the Pharisee and the Sadducees, right. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, that's why they're so...sad, you see, again, so you always remember that's the difference. The Saducee, doesn't believe. So they're trying to say okay Jesus, if there's a resurrection, then she gets married seven times, who's she going to be married to? Now my Mother has been married three times, right? So who's she going to be married to when she goes to heaven? The answer is nobody, none of them. You might be really close to your spouse. You might think they are the greatest thing on earth, now. Some of you have been married more than once, twice, you don't get to pick either. You will love everybody in heaven, the way you love your spouse now, but more so.

In fact, if your enemy makes it to heaven, you will love your enemy in heaven, more than you love your spouse now. Is that exciting? You know, but that's the point. And so what this gospel and the first reading and the second reading talk about is the theological virtue of what? Do you know? Hope, I heard it Ed, good job Ed. I think he's the only one what pays any attention anyways. But anyway, it's the theological virtue of hope that we need to be people of hope, listen to all these boys that died today in the first reading, they talked about the hope of the resurrection, and that was before Jesus came and proved there was a resurrection from rising from the dead. They say you may take my life now but the God of the Universe will give me back my life for eternity. That's hope! And Paul talk about we need hope and he says God will strengthen us so what that means is a couple things.

The first thing that means is we need to be people of hope. That no matter how dark it gets, no matter who gets elected, at this election, no matter what, we need hope! Remember how bad it got in Rome when they were killing the

Christians. The Empire was the greatest of the empires. They tried to destroy us. It's now the Vatican that sits on the very place they tried to kill us. The Empire of Rome doesn't exist anymore. The church does. That's hope and we need to make sure that we are these people of hope and we don't become these pessimistic people that say well I am only dealing with reality, no you're not, and you're being a pessimist. You and I are called to be hope in the midst of all this. The hope that no matter what, God is going to be with us and strengthen us, even if some of us die in spite of it. We're still these people of hope and that God always wins.

The second thing we have to have is that we make sure that we live not just for this life, but for eternal life and this is a problem for too many people in America. A lot of other places don't struggle as much as we do, especially the poor places. You know now again, I've talked about this at every homily, for funerals, but you have to remember this, heaven is much nicer than Erie, Pennsylvania. It just is people. Now you just got to know this. I know for some of you, this is hard to grasp. You come and you live in nice homes, and oh Erie's perfect. Oh please, heaven is our home, not Erie, and not wherever you came from and not from wherever you came from, and not whoever listening to this, wherever you are on this earth, the place you are living now is not home, heaven is. So our goal is, for people of hope is we keep our eyes on the goal. The goal is eternal life. And what I do on this earth is to get me ready for eternal life. And again if I talked about at the last mass, at 8:30 today, the place where heaven is, is the place of love. And so when you and I love, we prepare ourselves for eternal life. Again when you and I go beyond ourselves every day, and I live my life for others, I am already learning what heaven is going to be like.

Again, I am sure I told you this story about heaven and hell is the same banquet type room, right? There's all this food and all this glorious food and all wonderful stuff but the people in hell are starving to death and the people in heaven are happy. Why? Because in both places they have attached to their hands if you will, three foot forks and spoons. And the people in hell are always trying to take care of themselves. To feed themselves, it's all about me. So they starve to death because it's impossible for them to feed themselves. The people in heaven have already learned while they were on earth; the purpose is to feed others. Because with these 3 foot long forks and spoons at the end of their hands, they can only feed one another. And when they feed one another, they have true life and so

we need to learn that on this earth. Your time on this earth is not for you, it's for you to take of others. To feed others.

That's why when I ask in confession, "do you consistently take care of the poor", this isn't a big thing, "I try." It's either take care of the poor or be damned. It's just that simple. This life is not for you. It's for you to prepare for the next life and that means we put and feed others, we take care of others. So we have the hope. The next thing we do is we lay down our life for others and the 3rd thing is we get this, all these things from the strength of God. Because that's what Paul talks about. May He strengthen you. To do the things you need to do.

And again, it's hard, you know I was down in South Carolina this weekend. Had a fine time, I have never been to Greenville before, and there was me, Tom Peterson, Father Bill Casey, you know Father Bill Casey. He's on EWTN every once in a while. He's Father Crope reincarnated and he sounds just like him and he talks like (low gruff voice) "when the judgment comes and if you're found in mortal sin, you will go to hell". Now that makes me look gentle, huh? I was sitting there shaking, ohhhh. I think, I don't want to die in mortal sin. But then I sat there and I spoke right after him, there was no break, and I just says you do realize that Jesus tells us the final judgment; He gives us the question to this answer. It's not just about staying out of mortal sin, because nowhere in Matthew 25, does it talk about, making sure we are not in mortal sin, we learn this later.

But when Jesus gives us the questions and answers to the exam, it's Matthew 25, it says "When I was hungry, you fed me, when I was thirsty, you gave me drink, when I was alone, you visited me and then He will say come, come blessed of my Father." But then He says that next thing which hopefully none of us ever hear, get out of my sight, you condemned to the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Why? I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty, you gave me no drink. It's those sins of omission, huh? And so it's the question we have to prepare ourselves and think about and reflect on this week, is how I am doing? Am I more concerned about others than myself? Do I make sure that I take care of the poor on a consistent basis, not just when I can fit it into my schedule? Do I lay down my life? Am I just living for this earth, or am I living for eternity? All that is not given is lost. Which means that you and I, if we just cling to this world, I promise you, you are going to lose it. Every one of us is going to

die. That is what we focus on in November and you only get to keep what you have given away, so give it away. May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.