

February 5, 2017
Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time - Cycle A
Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning? How are you?

Today the gospel, Jesus says to us, "You are the light of the world". And He says as we are the light of the world, you don't hide that light; you put it on a lamp stand so that it lights the whole house. And He says so must people see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. But the light is the good works that we do. The bringing of others to Christ, that reach out to them in love and then people will glorify the Father because of what we've done.

This past Thursday, we had Pastor Derrick Sanford, who I talked about, who spoke at our 150th anniversary preparation. And his talk was phenomenal and I am going to steal most of his stuff for this homily today, just so you know. And I want everyone to go on line and watch the talk, you need to watch it, it is one of the best talks and he explains church in a very good way about what we need to be doing. So I encourage you, just go to Stjoesbol.org, you go to our 150th speaker series, its 150th anniversary, and you do speakers, and you get to "watch the videos" and you can watch this video and I encourage everybody here or anyone who is listening to me now, to please go to that video and watch it. After you go there and you find out how much better a speaker he is than me, you need to continue to stay at our parish and not go to Grace, I am just telling you now.

Anyway, one of the things he talked about, he talked about how we are the body of Christ, but the problem with the church has been lately is most people, the part of the body they are is either the ears of Jesus or the butt of Jesus. They sit in church and listen and that's it. That's not what we are called to do; we are called to be the hands and the feet of Jesus. You know, he talked about the reality that God is a mission God, that from the very beginning, God has always went apart from himself, He created us. When He created the church, He told us to go out and do stuff. But too often, the church stays focused on itself. And that's the problem. Then he talks about today, like it's the Super Bowl. When everybody watches the Super Bowl, I will be watching with Father Detisch, pray for me. So I'll be over there for a while before I come back for 8:00 mass, but he'll talk about when people are in the Super Bowl, when anybody plays a football game, they get

into a huddle and they get a play and then they go in the offense and they try to win the game. And he says too, the Super Bowl would be pretty bad if everybody got in the huddle and just said, let's stay in the huddle. It's so comfortable in here, I like you, you like me, let's just stay in the huddle together. We wouldn't watch football; football wasn't created for the huddle. We in the church like to stay in the huddle. Isn't it good we are here together in church, isn't it wonderful? I love you, you love me, let's do things together. We need to get out of the huddle and go out into the world and be missionaries, if you will, and not go to all the different places.

One of the things he talked about which just completely surprised me, that there are 10,000 refugees in the city of Erie. Did you know we had 10,000 refugees in the city of Erie? I had no idea. 10,000 now listen people, we only have 100,000 people in the city of Erie, and 300,000 in the area, most people don't live in the city. One-hundred thousand in the city. Ten percent of them, 10,000 are refugees. I had no idea. Right? And then he talks about he was helping one of the parishes, going into one of the refugees houses, and he walked into the kitchen and the kitchen, Erie, Pa did not have a floor. It was a floor of dirt. In Erie, Pa. No idea! Who, if anybody, really wants to move into the city of Erie? Anybody you know? Not many, right? In the city of Erie, they are killing each other constantly now. We just had our 100th Take Back the Night with the Sisters, huh, killing each other. The schools are in horrible condition, nobody wants to send their kid to an Erie school. Nobody wants to live in the city, you pay more taxes than anywhere else, and you get the least of anything. And so right in our city, this city is dying, on our watch, is that okay with you? That's what the pastor said, is it okay that on our watch, the city of Erie will die?

Because most of us, of course, live outside the city, most of us are suburban people, I'm not, I live right in the city, and I don't know if you noticed. But the reality is, but even living right smack in the city, I had no idea of the 10,000 people. And what have I done, nothing. Huh? What have you done? Hopefully, something. But most of us, nothing. You know he talked about he got a bunch of people that serve Erie, and they went to, I think Tracey Middle School, is that Tracey, is that a city school? Lincoln Middle School, they went to Lincoln, and

1200 people on a weekend completely transformed Lincoln Elementary School. This summer they are going to go to Central and they are going to completely redo Central. In March, they are going to go out and do something. And we haven't been part of that.

The city of Erie is dying around us and that cannot be okay with any of us. God is calling us to go forth and to be His light. So that these people who are not Christian, these people who are maybe Christian, and any of these people who might be any other religion, might start to praise God for the good works that they see through His followers. People of God, if this is all we do as a church, is come together and love each other – period – there's not much hope for our salvation, because this is not what God created church for. God created church for us to reach out and be salt in the world, to be light in the world, not to take care of ourselves. So we need to go and start doing something. We begin by watching the video, if you can't even do that, what's the point, why do you even show up here? You need to at least do that and then start saying, what did God create me to do? What does He want me to do? To change the city, to change the world, to change my neighborhood. Is it okay for us just to take care of ourselves and stay in the huddle all the days of our life, or does God call us to go forth from here and change the world starting with our city. We need to do something and it begins with you and it begins with me. Let's get out of the huddle and bring the Light of Christ to the world. Got it? Get it? Gonna do it? May each of you know His love today and forever Amen.