

March 19, 2017 – 3rd Sunday of Lent – Cycle A

Fr. Larry Richards

Good Morning and how are you?

Today the readings deal with faith, they deal with God spending time with us and they deal with what we need to do with all this. We start with the woman at the well. Now, of course, she had three strikes against her from the beginning correct? One, she was a woman and Jews did not talk to women alone unless it was their wives. And so that was strike one. Bam, he's talking to a woman. And that's what the apostles says, what? They were surprised. He's talking to a woman.

Second strike, she was a Samaritan. And a Samaritan as we've have talked about a couple weeks ago, when we've talked about the Samaritans, the good Samaritan, we find out that the Samaritans were the people the Jews hated the most. They would never share anything, again, as we've talked about it could be someone for us would be ISIS. Someone we would hate the most. And so the second strike against her was she was a Samaritan.

The third strike against her, of course, was that she was an adulterous. And Jesus knew she was an adulterous, right? That you have been with five...."Go get your husband." "I don't have a husband," yeah, you're right, "you had five of them and the one you're with now which is number six," in case your counting, "isn't your husband either." Hum! Three strikes. And yet, Jesus goes out of his way to enter into relationship with her. So desirous is He of her faith that He goes out of His way. He doesn't let others dictate to him who He will relate to. And then not only that, she goes and tells all the Samaritans and they come and they say to Him, "Stay with us." And He stayed with them for two days. Again, He stayed with the enemy of the people of Israel. He stayed with them. He entered into a relationship with them. Why? To save them.

And so when it come us what God wants is He comes into us no matter where we are. He wants us to be with Him. But we first of all got to ask Him to stay with us. And what that means is so needed in the Church today - the thing that opens every sacrament is what? Faith. If you have no faith, like again, have you ever noticed why people get confirmed and nothing happens. Why? Because most of the people that get confirm today I would suggest 98% of people who get confirmed are children in this very room will be confirmed in a couple weeks. And to most nothing will happen. Why? Because there is no faith.

Have you ever noticed when you come up to communion every week nothing changes inside of you? Why? Because some of us have no faith. We just go through the motions. If don't you have faith the sacrament cannot be unlocked in your life. The power of the sacrament nothing happens without faith. You can go to communion every day and nothing happens. Because again, there is no faith. What's necessary for every sacrament to work in our life is faith. So is you have no faith you can go every day nothing will change until you finally have faith that unlocks the power of the sacrament.

And so what He was yearning for, the reason He entered into relationship with her is that she would have faith in Him the Messiah. The reason He entered into relationship with the Samaritans is that they could have faith in Him who is the Messiah so that they could enter in to this new life. Remember He says when they came to Him and they say hey, you better eat something. He goes oh I have food to eat that you do not know about. Well they thought that someone gave Him some food. And He wanted to hit him and says.....he says, excuse me, my will is to do what? My food is to do....the will of my father. What is the will of God? That all people be saved and come to knowledge of his truth. Right? And so what was Jesus doing? He was doing everything in his power that all people even my enemies, even those in sin that all people come to the knowledge of the truth to be saved.

And so, first of all, in our own life we got to sit there and think, do I invite Jesus into my life? Do I have faith in everything that I do in the sacraments? Do I meet the sacrament with Jesus in it? With this faith to unlock it so that I too can have the power of the sacraments that God gives us. Faith is necessary for every sacrament. And faith is necessary and faith in this Lord I believe in you I don't feel like it. Lord I believe no matter what. You know faith isn't faith until there is nothing left to hold on to. It's this jump - Jesus I trust You completely with all that I am. That means I trust You with my life, my family, I trust You with my money, I trust You with my sexuality, I trust You with everything Jesus. Faith will unlock the sacrament for you. And so once that happens in your life and my life, once we're there, and a lot of us of course are there, then we cannot keep it with us. Right?

Our job then if anyone went to daily mass yesterday, and I'm sure that everyone here went to daily mass, right? And so, but if you would have gone to yesterday's mass, you've have heard the Gospel of the prodigal son. And the Gospel of the prodigal son, you know the way it begins we always focus on the way it ends. But the way it begins is the Pharisees and the scribes were complaining. Can you imagine? Not that ever happens in the Church today. Almost every day on Facebook people are complaining the same reason the Pharisees and the scribes. They're very alive today but they think their holy. And what were they complaining about - Jesus who is the Christ. This Man welcomes sinners and He eats with them. They hated Him because of that. Pope Francis welcomes sinners and he eats with them and people complain. Wonder if any things changed. Just the names of the people who are the Pharisees. That's all that changes. Some of them are priests, some of them are bishops, some of them are cardinals but they're still the Pharisees who complain about the Pope who welcome sinners and eats with them.

And so sometimes with us our job has to be the same. You have homework this week. Are you ready? You got to welcome sinners and eat with them. Now for some people they are going to take you out to dinner this week just so you know. They're going to say, hey, I need to eat with a sinner and welcome them. So can we go to dinner this week? And you going to be so surprised. Who? Me? Moi? But we sit there and we go to have this same mindset as Christ. Our food got to be the same to do the will of the Father. The Father's will all people be saved and come in knowledge of His truth. So just as Jesus does with us, just as Jesus did with the Samaritan woman and the Samaritans, He went out of His way and stayed with them. He never became a

sinner and he never sinned with them and neither can we. But we need to reach out to them as Jesus reached out to us. And He wants to use us as the sacrament of salvation.

So go beyond your boundaries this week. Reach out and bring others the gift of the Gospel of the love of God. The mercy of God and do the Father's will. Bring them home. You got it? Get it? Going to do it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.