

March 26, 2017 – 4th Sunday of Lent – Cycle A  
Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning! How are you? Blessed.

Truly blessed! So what was? Well there were a couple themes, what was the theme, in all three of the readings today? Sight, people who see, for the people who could and another one was light. You know in the second reading it talks about “awake oh sleeper, rise from your sleep and Christ will give you light.” Because light helps us to see. If you notice in the first reading, the people are looking for the king in a different light and God looks into the heart, He sees differently than man sees. Then in the Gospel we see the difference between those who are blind spiritually and those Christ gives sight to. And so what we are called to do is walk in this light. This light is the light of faith, hope, and love, the three Theological Virtues, and to see all life in this light is the way we must live. But most people, you know when I used be out at Penn State Behrend, and walk out there at night when I was Chaplain, and most people, I believe just live in a fog.

Even people who come to church, they just live in a fog. That there’s no light, there’s just darkness, and they don’t see things. In this past week I met someone who did not see things correctly. You know I was in New Orleans all week doing a Parish Mission, and it was a great blessing, someone hadn’t been to confession, and came to me, in 61 years. Can you imagine? 61 years in darkness, and a lot of them it was 50 years, it was a great mission when it comes to that. Then I go up and speak to a high school in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and so, up there it was a great thing. I had spoken thirteen years ago and I took a kid and I punched him in the arm and I told him “you’re gonna be a great priest! Now be a priest!” He is now the priest chaplain at the high school I just went and spoke at. It was a great time. When he got up and talked about it was quite funny.

But on my way up to the high school, I stopped to get breakfast at Ihop, it’s one of my favorite places Ihop, and the woman came up to me and she gave me a menu, and she said “oh Father, here, just go to the back, that’s where the Senior Menu is.” Yes, yes, she was blind, I’m sure she did not see correctly! (Laughter) But there was something great on that Senior Menu and I ordered from it, but that’s beside the point. It ruined my day!

Anyway, we come today, though, we have to start living by the way of Faith, Hope, and Love. That means we got to start seeing the reality, the way God sees it. First of all that we have Faith, now Faith goes against all the doubt and the darkness in our life. Remember when the devil, he first tempted Eve, he tempted her by asking a question and instilling doubt, you know, did God really say? We have all these doubts that the devil throws at us. We see all this, and see supposed darkness, you go on Facebook and all these people who claim to be Christians, are in such darkness. They just see darkness, they just see garbage right?

Today in the Gospel, you know here’s Jesus heals somebody, and what do the Pharisees say about Him? “He’s a sinner, we know He is not of God, because He broke the Sabbath.” Great darkness. Yet they thought they were in great light. Today people have this “I have great faith! Look at the rules! Look at the rules!” If you’re looking at rules, rules have nothing to do with faith. You look at Jesus for faith, then when you have this faith, you know no matter how

dark the darkness is, the light is always stronger. As I have talked about a hundred, thousand times. That we need to be the people of the light, who brings light to the darkness, not to continue the curse of darkness. When we awake from this sleep, then we start living, seeing things in the light of faith. So when we look at the light of faith we always are people who get to the next thing that we are people of hope that no matter how dark the darkness gets, no matter who is around us, no matter what's going on around us, God is always going to win! That we need to be hope in this life.

Think about how many people you know and maybe it's us, who are always complaining about how things aren't going right? How bad the world is. Well, that's great but it doesn't change anything, it just brings us all down. We need to be these people of hope, that's why I started The Reason for Our Hope Foundation. That Jesus is always going to win, the light is always stronger, no matter how bad it is, we need to be these people of hope. We see the world differently than Fox News or CNN News, or any of them. We don't look at the world that way. If you do there's a problem. We are Christians. Again, yesterday at the Men's Conference, the mission and men's and women's conferences with the same thing "Will you give your life to Jesus?" Are you willing to give your life to Jesus? They stand up with me and we say the sinner's prayer, and I say very simply, "You are not your own anymore. You belong to Jesus, you just died. Now Christ raises you up." So we need to make sure we see things as God see things, we see things with the eyes of faith and of hope. Correct?

Now the last thing way we look at life is the command of Jesus, Himself, we look at all things with Love. And that means, again, people love to condemn others, I do it, that's part of the reality. But that's not the way God does it, God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Correct? He didn't so hate the world. Then after that you know, because you've had me all these years, John 3:17 says "God did not send His son to condemn the world, but to save it." See this got to be us, that if God does not condemn the world, we cannot condemn the world. Again, as I told you before, Mother Theresa of Calcutta, what's the only sin, she said, that she never had to confess? That she judged anybody, and then when I read that I thought, I'm going to hell for sure, but then the second part was, when they asked "Mother how can you say you've never judged anybody?" She said "because if I judged them, I couldn't love them." Wouldn't that be great if all of us decided to stopped judging everybody in our lives, in the world, and we decided to love them?

Again, it takes a different way of looking at things. There's plenty to judge for everything. Isn't there plenty? There's plenty to judge in my life, in your lives. Every one of us, let's pull our life up and say let's look at it. Everyone here could out twenty things we could be judged on. Correct? Every one of us. Or we could decide to look differently, to look at each other with eyes of love. To see these things of affirmation, to build one another up. It's always there, how do we see, what is our perspective, is our perspective of life, Faith, Hope, and Love? Or is our perspective of life, judgement, anger, and disgust and judgement and all these things? God is calling us to be different, and it's a process. None of us, it happens instantly to. But when you and I start thinking, this is what God wants, He wants me to walk in the light of Faith, Hope, and Love. To live a life to see the way God sees, not the way the world sees. If we all started doing that, we've have to start locking the doors because too many people would start trying to get here

every Sunday. “Those people see so differently there. They look at everything with Faith, Hope, and Love.” That’s got to be our goal.

May each of you know His love today and forever, Amen.