

July 2, 2017 - 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Cycle A  
Fr. Larry Richards

Good Morning? How are you?

Even after the gospel, you're still blessed? Most of you don't listen. But anyway, it was one of those gospels, I'm sure if you really listened to it. "I don't know if I agree with that, I don't know, you know." Unless if you love your father and mother more than Me, you're not worthy of Me. If you love your children more than Me, you're not worthy of Me. And you say "I'm not worthy anyway, I don't care, that's the way it is." But the reality is, I'll never forget I gave a homily years ago when I was still at St. Luke's, which was years ago because yesterday starts my 16<sup>th</sup> year here, isn't that amazing, 16 years. I don't know why you're clapping; you still have me for 18 more years. Think about it, God willing. So, but again, we all know that when you die and you go before God and you say "I was with Father Larry for all those years," He goes "you already went to hell, come in to heaven."

While I was over at St. Luke's, I remember I gave the homily on this and I says, "Listen, you need to love God more than you love your parents, more than you love your spouse, more than you love your children," and you can tell the people there, they are looking at me and some of them were constipated like hummmm, like I don't believe that, and so again people always like to tell me what they think, and so as I was walking out the door this guy came up to me and says "Larry, Father, I completely disagree with you". You're completely wrong but what's the problem? "I will not love God more than I love anybody else in my family. That's just wrong." I go, well, if you don't love God more than everybody else, then you love your family with your love, which is a very imperfect love, which is a selfish love, which is a moody love, which is a love that if they look at you wrong in the morning, you are mad at them for the rest of the day, if they don't live by your rules, you get irritated with them for the rest of your day. If your spouse doesn't do what you want, you get mad at them for the rest of the day, and that's the way you do your family a great dis-service.

But if you love them, and you love God, more than anybody, now the love of God dwells within you and you love them with His love which is unselfish, which is unconditional, which is everlasting, which is life giving, so again that always comes back to that same fundamental reality. If you seek your life, "I'll do it my way", you'll lose it. But if you lose your life, for God for others, then you are

going to find it. And it's when we finally give away our life is when we truly give life.

You know I was up in Green Bay, Wisconsin yesterday and the day before, and I was up there for an ordination. Because about 10 years ago, I spoke in Milwaukee and I was doing a men's conference there, and you know we had a lot of people there Milwaukee is always a big conference, we had over 2,000 people there and I'm sitting there and there's high school kids coming, as always. I grab this one high school kid and I hit him, and I said "you be a priest". You're not allowed to do that anymore, I get in trouble, but anyways, bam, "you be a priest" and he smiled and then he says "Oh no Father, he says I have already prayed and it's not my thing, da-ta-da-ta-da." And then of course he started calling me, will you be with me, and send me letters, and I would sit there and say whatever God wants. Well he entered the seminary. And yesterday, he got ordained a priest. It was the most glorious thing. And what he did was he sent me a thing this morning, because I went up there with his family and different things and this is what he sends me, a text this morning. And it goes on about different things. But he says "Thank you for being a witness to me. Thank you for calling me out of a life of sin, into a life of joy".

What happens is if we only live for ourselves, like people don't want to be priests nowadays, 'cause if I'm a priest I won't be happy, I'll have to give away everything, and I won't be able to get married, I won't be able to have sex, it will be a miserable life. Really! It's the most wonderful life in the world. When you sit there and you give everything away, you receive everything. That's the gospel. And we got to not be afraid of the gospel. We got to know that when I give away things, when I learn to be a generous person, like when you heard in the first reading, that they decided that they were going to take their home and make sure the prophet had a nice place to stay. And they received life.

Whenever you and I, again in the second reading, it talks about we must die to sin, I heard, you know the priests were at Emmaus two weeks ago and it was phenomenal, we used to have these nutty people who used to come and talk to us, but this last week, we had Monsignor Rossetti, and he was very good, and he was very good with the priests because he says things like they are and I like people who are like that, I don't know if you know that. But he sat there and he says to the priests, "you must deal with sin in your life." You must get rid of serious sin, period. You know, to say that to a bunch of priests takes a lot of guts; you must get rid of sin. Sin will never bring you anything but pain. Is that true? Absolutely, positively. But to hear it so explicitly, and that's the same with us, we

all need to deal with serious sin in our life, we can't just keep making excuses for it because sin doesn't bring us life. Sin doesn't bring us peace, sin doesn't bring us joy, but since we are all afraid of death and dying to self, we give in to sin. All it does is kill us more.

When we learn to deal with these things, and say "Lord, I am going to die to myself for love of you and love of others." That's when you and I will truly get true life. So the call of the gospel today is a gospel that says, deny yourself, put other people in front of you. Be generous and then you are going to get eternal life. This is the call. So what we need to do, we are not consumers when we come to church, about what am I going to get at church this week, but we come before God every Sunday and we come before each other and say, "How can I help?" "What can I do?" "What can I do for you?" It's always about thinking of others and boy when you and I do this, at first it's uncomfortable, because we got to die but then we get eternal life. So today, let's listen to the gospel when he says we must love Him above all, love our families above everything we own, and when we do that we will have a greater love and a greater life than we could ever imagine. You got it? Get it? Gonna live it? May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.