

July 30, 2017 – 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A

Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning. How are you? Blessed! You say that better than any other Mass. I always say that the 8:30 Mass I think you're dead out there. Is anyone really blessed? They get mad at me, I know, I know, but it doesn't change anything.

But anyway, remember last week we talked about Romans and we talked about Paul telling us we do not know how to pray as we ought. So I encouraged you to ask the Holy Spirit to pray with you during this week and hopefully it's something you do for the rest of your life, because we do not know how to pray, so we let the Spirit take over. When we let the Spirit take over we can be convicted about things, that's what we hear about today. Continuing the Letter to the Romans. Today we deal with Romans Chapter 8, verse 28. Which a lot us should have memorized, "For we know that all things work together for good. For those who love Him and are called according to His purpose." So the first thing we got to know from the Word of God today is that we know, we know, we know! That means we are convicted, in our heart, in our soul, that we know God is worthy of trust. That when God says something, He is faithful to His word: all things work together for good. Like when you look at the crucifix, and you think how did that work together for good? We were saved, so sometimes it doesn't work out the way we want it to. It will work out the way for eternity, it will be best. So we got to trust in God, who is good, and that God who is good will have all things worked together for good. But not for everybody, correct?

Everybody wants to claim that verse, but you can't claim that verse without claiming the whole verse, "God makes all things together for good, to those who LOVE Him, and are called according to His purpose." So God does not make all things work together for good for everybody, just for those who have given their lives to them, given Him their lives. So again, we got to ask ourselves is that have we completely surrendered our lives to Him? Just because you show up to Mass every week does not mean in no way shape or form have you surrendered your life to Jesus. It might mean you won't go to hell that you are a good person, but that does not mean you completely surrendered your life to Jesus. To completely surrender your life, means you completely surrendered everything right? Remember it only takes one little thread to keep a bird from flying, just one. You don't need a big thing, just one thread. That which keeps us from surrendering, could only be one thing.

So you got to reflect on your life and I encourage you, you got to do this week. Have you fully surrendered your life to Jesus? That means every part of it. Have you surrendered your time to Jesus? Meaning that you give time to Him every day that you don't try to fit Him into your day that you try to build your day around Him. That you surrender your life to Him, period, comma, end of all paragraphs.

Have you surrendered your body to Him? Is He the Lord of your body? Is He the Lord of your sexuality, or do you still sit there and say I'm a follower of Christ but I still use artificial birth control, I still do all these things, but I just ask God to bless it. If you have not surrendered your sexuality, your sexual life to Christ, you have not surrendered your life to God. You just haven't.

Have you given your money, surrendered your money to God? The way you know you've surrendered your money to God, is that you give God 10 percent off the top. Not to the Church, I could care less. Your money belongs to God, so you always ask Him what you are going to do with your money. So all these things, you have to sit there and think "have I fully surrendered my life to God?" If not what you do you got to do to surrender it? Because the only promise of this, is for those who love God. If you love God, you've surrendered yourself to Him. Why? Because He surrendered Himself to you.

Most people, the reason they haven't surrendered themselves completely, is because they are afraid, they think if I fully surrender myself to God, I'm going to lose a lot. I'm going to get the short end of the stick, I'm going to be miserable for the rest of my life. That this God of the Universe will not make me happy if I give Him everything. Well, think about how sad that is, your vision of God. God promises you that when you fully surrender everything to Him, He'll make it work out for you. So it's going to be your choice. You're either in charge of your life, or God's in charge of your life. You both can't be in charge of your life.

Then it goes beyond that, another way we show that we love Him is that after we surrender ourselves to Him then we live a life He wants us to live. We become sons and daughters as the second reading says. We become like Christ and that means we got to deal with sin that is in our life. Because when you and I sin, we take out that all things work together for good out of the power of God's hands, because now He will give us what we want, and that's our sin. The first consequence of sin is that God gives us what we like right?

Years ago, when I was a young seminarian, I used to work full time with Fr. Peterson, with Maria House Projects, there was a young kid who maybe 28, was a big addict, drug addict, and alcoholic, and he used to tell me, "Oh Larry, I know God is always going to take care of me no matter what." His name was Pierre, and I said "Pierre, only if you do His will. If you don't, He's going to give you what you want." He goes "Oh I don't believe that Father, no matter what it all turns out to be good." Okay. A couple years later, they found Pierre in a dumpster, because he was drunk. He went into the dumpster because he was freezing in Buffalo, and he went in there to get warm and he froze to death. God does not make everything work together for good. If you sit there and go against His will, the first thing He will give you is what you want.

So again this promise that we got to believe in is that we got to surrender our lives to Him for that promise to click in. So again we need to reflect on do we really trust God and His promise? The second thing is do we completely surrender our life to Him? If not, why not and what do you got to do to surrender? Then, thirdly are you living your life in Him so well that that promise automatically kicks in for you? Because you strive with all your heart, that you strive to

do to please Him and you've surrendered everything to Him then you can claim that promise for your own self. We know that God makes all things work together for good to those who love Him, and are called according to His promise or purpose.

You got it? Get it? Gonna live it? May each of you know His love today and forever,
Amen.