

October 1, 2017 – 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A
Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning! How are you? Blessed!

There's so much to preach on today with the readings and then I'm going to focus on the second reading in the Letter to the Philippians and as we focus on it, I want to begin that one homily with just that one verse that says "humbly think of others as more important than yourself." I hate that line myself. Humbly think of others as more important than yourself. Now that goes against everything we learn in society and yet that's the Gospel. I put that on Twitter this morning and Facebook and all that. I always wait and someone always immediately responds. "That's the verse that got me in trouble because I let people walk all over me." That's not what God wants.

That isn't what God wants, that's not what this verse is talking about. When we talk about thinking humbly of ourselves and others as more important than us, that means we put others first. That does mean we let them walk on us, it means we serve them. Because that's what Jesus did. When we humble ourselves and we think of others more important than us we can become like the Pharisees, the tax collectors, and the prostitutes in the gospel. They knew that everybody was more important than them that's why they could listen to John that's why they could listen to Jesus. The Pharisees thought they were the most important because they could do everything right. It's that attitude that some Christians get because they think they are superior to everyone else but we are not. Everybody is more important than us. We are here, we exist to serve. Now I know that gets very hard, trust me, as Pastor I've thinking of literally resigning. Because of all the stuff that goes on, one thing after another. Every day is more stress. Especially as we get closer to Oktoberfest. It's just one big stressful thing. Begging, pleading, but that's part of the job. That's part of what I am called to do. To come to humbly think that all you people are more important than me.

Now that's much easier when that comes down to that. It's the day in, day out stuff that we always got to think. So it comes back if you will to I have told you a million times if everybody at this mass has done it already right? If I come to your house, if I go to your bathroom, there's the three words on your mirror. Everyone here has those three words on your mirror correct? What are those three words? I am third. If you haven't put them on your mirror yet, today would be a good day to put those words on your mirror. I was in Kittanning yesterday. I left here at 4:15 drive the two hours to Kittanning say Mass, give three one hour talks, a forty-five minute question and answer, said goodbye to the people and drove back up to have the 4:15 Mass. It was like oh crazy!

One of the highlights of it, is one of the kids who used to come up here. His family lived in Kittanning and they used to come up here once a month, if you remember the family, but the one kid now is twenty years old and he goes to Franciscan University. He said "Father you know what I got on my mirror?" I am third. Great job! To remind me, to give a little bit of hope, that

this does take place in people's hearts. This got to be what we are striving for. I don't live it perfectly as you all know. I'm sure different people would love to come up and tell me how I am not that type of person. You all could come up and it would take the next six hours at least. This is your problem Father, I get it. I don't live it the way I need to. But neither do any of you. We got to keep getting up and trying.

See Jesus gives us the example right? Because after He says we got to think of others as more important than us, then it says what simply we are called to, is to have the attitude of Christ. To have that attitude "Though He was in the form of God. He did not deem equality with God a thing to be grasped at. Rather He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave." He didn't end it when He was on Earth did He? Today at this mass, the God that the Universe cannot contain, on this altar, will become a slave to us. Will feed us with Himself. Think about what happens at every mass. We could do anything. I was thinking about Cardinal O'Connor, God rest him, a couple of years ago at St. Patrick's Cathedral, he's giving out Communion and a radical homosexual comes up to him and receives Communion, drops Jesus on the ground, and steps on Him. Cardinal O'Connor continued to give out Communion to other people. I, of course, would have tackled that man, and beat the hell out of him right there in front of Jesus. That's why I have issues.

But the reality is that the God of the Universe let Himself be stamped on. By someone who hated Him. So much did God humble Himself before us and He does it to us this very day and if this is the audacity of the humility of our God, that even in Heaven, He continues to serve us and become vulnerable to us. How much more must I become this person who lives a life of God is first, others are second and I am third. To decide every day that I exist to serve. Will it hurt us? Sometimes. A lot of times. But will it give us true life? Always.

So today let's reflect on the reading that God gives us. Let us ask for the grace to think humbly of ourselves and others as more important than us. Let us ask for the grace that every day we serve. For the days we don't, we don't go crazy. We just say "okay God, I'll do better tomorrow." We make a true amendment, a purpose, and then we live the life that God calls us to live.

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