

November 5, 2017 – 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A  
Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning! How are you? Blessed!

Today the readings they begin by beating up the priests, and we deserve to get beat up, of course yesterday I was in Milwaukee and I spoke to 25 hundred women; 2,500 women at a women's conference. I was the first speaker, I was blessed among women. The reality is while I was there and I was talking to someone about the reality that Pope Francis beats us priests up almost every time he talks and that's exactly what we need. It's readings like that that priests need to hear, that I need to hear to remind me primarily that my job, of course, is to be nothing. My job, of course, is to humble myself. My job, of course, is to forget about me, and be concerned about others. That's my job, that's what He created me to be a priest for. Sometimes I don't do that well, as most of you know but the reality is the call to keep going up, not staying down, to keep standing up and going forward, and keep doing what God wants us to do.

But now we need to look at this reading, it isn't just for priests, it's for you too. Aren't you excited? What He's calling all of us to do, is in the first reading, the problem with the priests is what? They were focused on themselves. He says to them, "Now oh priests this commandment's for you, if you do not listen, if you do not lay it to heart, if you do not give glory to my name." So what He's calling the priests to but since we're all priests, you know, through Christ now, He's calling all of us to listen, to take what we hear to heart, and to do what we do to give glory to His name. So He calls us to listen, to take to heart what He says to us, and to live our life to give glory to His name. So we gotta sit there and think do we pray, as we pray, as we talked about last week, truly listening to God? It takes that time, it just takes that heart that says Lord I want to listen to you. And again the best way to listen to the Lord is to, as we talked about very recently, is to listen to Scripture.

To meditate, you know I'd encourage you, that one of the things that had been very good in life, is that I have the YouVersion of the Bible app, do you have the Bible app? Does anyone have the Bible app? It's a great thing. In there is an app that gives you Bible studies and it's private Bible studies and I'm in the middle of one now, on Philippians and it's written by Rick Warren. It takes less than five minutes a day, when I'm doing my holy hour, I get there and last week I was in a funk. You ever get into a funk? For two days I was in a miserable mood and I didn't go to staff. I went down there and said Mass and then grabbed my stuff and went back upstairs. I was in a funk and I couldn't get out of it. I kept saying "Jesus I'm in a funk, and I need to get out of the funk." So then I started the thing with Rick Warren and it's on Philippians about encountering all joy and breaking through the word of God. It's about how God talks and when we focus on ourselves and we get this negative thoughts about what's going on than we get into this funk. He says what we need to do, of course, is to forget about ourselves and to worry about the Will of God in our life and this when we start thinking about the Will of God, then we will encounter all joy.

That instantly, instantly, pulled me out of my funk. The Word of God had the power to pull me out of my funk when I just didn't listen to it but I took it to heart. I got out of my chair after my holy hour and everything had changed for me. Everything changed, because I spent time with Him in His Word, I listened as someone reflected into it, I went back to that Word and I let it enter into me and it got me out of my funk. When you and I go to pray, instead of just sitting there and telling God what we need, we need to let Him speak to us through His Word, so we can change our hearts, when our hearts need changing. How often do you think our hearts need changing? Every day, it's just that way, my heart needs changed every day your heart needs changed every day and that's okay. Because that means we are allowing our hearts to change. More so, letting Jesus change our hearts every day what does that mean that we are growing. That's so important to all of us that we grow.

So I encourage you, again if you have the app, every day it will remind you excuse me, you did not come and do your app time right now, and it will remind you to go back and do that Bible study and there's Bible studies on a thousand different things in there, it's a Protestant thing I get it, but most of it is pretty basic, there's grace, there's family, there's a thousand Bible studies that are very, very simple. Some of them is as short as five days and some are 37 days but it's less than five minutes and it can change you, promise you it can. It can really help you grow in your spiritual life. So what we need to do is listen, and then take that to heart, and then the third thing He says to everybody is to do what we do to give glory to His name.

Now Paul gives us a great example on how to do that. He says "I was gentle among you and I was not a burden to you." For Paul he didn't want to be a taker as head of the community, he wanted to be a giver. He says "I've been working amongst you and I am not one who wants to be a burden on you." So what he was saying was I don't want to be a taker, I want to make sure I put you first. When we do that in our lives we are bringing glory to God's holy name, because that is the way He was amongst us. He came and did everything for us. So when I'm in my prayer, and I'm trying to grow and different things. I think "do I got to do everything in my life for the glory of His name?" Am I growing and then pushing His name to grow. Am I glorifying God with my life? Am I showing people that God's inside of me and then giving Him glory?

The way I do that is not to be super holy, holy to be special. The women kept coming to me because I talked about the Blessed Mother yesterday. I was talking about my grandmother's devotion, how she had great devotion and I talked about again, like I did a couple weeks ago, the first time I ever heard the "F-word." Not F-A-R-T but the other "F-word" was from my grandmother's mouth as a boy. The women gasped! Like a lot you gasp! But my grandmother was a holy woman who spent an hour a day in prayer and the point of it was is that our call to holiness is a call to be real. Real. Real people who put other people in front of them. Real people who to go to God every day in prayer and know that I need to grow, that I need to change, that I need to listen to God's word. I need to take that to my heart and that every day I need to bring Him glory as a real person. With all my sins, with all my problems, with all the stuff that you and I have to keep going on, to keep getting real, to keep being real but knowing that God wants me to change every day.

That I can bring Glory to His name and the best way I do that, the best way we all do that is when we put God first, and others first. It's a process and as long as we are on the journey of this process we are in good shape. As long as this is where I want to go, with the Lord giving Him permission to change me, we are on a great road together, it's only when each of us would say "I'm fine as I am, I don't need to do anything else, don't bother me Father. Shut up I put my time in and I go home." If that is you, you have a problem. So say "Jesus, I want to listen to you. I want to take what you say to heart, and I want to bring your name Glory. We will great things in God's name."

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