

May 13, 2018 – 7th Sunday of Easter - Cycle B
Father Larry Richards

Good Morning! How are you? Blessed – but we are in a mess. Blessed in the midst of a mess and that's always what we gotta focus on. We gotta deal with the mess because the white elephant in the room, as the Bishop said to us last night, so the readings are most appropriate for today. Again, meaning that we gotta deal with David Poulson and what happened and I'm glad the kids are gone right now – the littlest amongst us – and deal with this mess that's happened in the Diocese this past week. It was one of the most horrendous things I've experienced since I've been a priest. You know, I had a funeral on Wednesday out at Holy Cross and it was the first time I had to come back and stop somewhere and I took my collar off to go into the store so nobody would know I was a priest because it was an embarrassing reality. It is embarrassing to be a priest now in the midst of the scandal that has happened; in the midst of one of our own hurting our kids which was an evil. It was a true Judas. You know, he was here. I took his place in this community and so we just gotta deal with the reality that how does one of us who we trusted turn against us?

I think that Jesus who was God picked the apostles. He who was God picked 12 men to follow Him and one of them betrayed Him. In the gospel and the first reading talk about that today. Even Jesus who chose the best of the best, He who is God, still one of them was free and chose to betray Him and so it's happened to us. What we have to do is first of all deal with it and second of all, call it evil but not worry about how does the church look in all of this and how do the priests look in all of this. You know, we gotta get over it. That's our deal. The reality is we have to pray for the victims and we have to fast for them. So what I've been doing is my fasting which I do every day, I've been just fasting for victims of sexual abuse, especially in the church, in this horrendous thing. You know, I used to comfort myself thinking that all these things happened years ago, not in our time. Then this past week, we find out this happened in our time.

I've known Poulson for over 30 years and I trusted him. Never, never, never, would I, never would I have had an inkling of any of this stuff. Some of you have known him. He's come here many times. Who of us would have ever known? But, this is the reality and the only thing I can do to help us to get through this is again, I've been a priest 29 years and I have tried with all my heart to always make sure that I stay faithful to God. Now, I have my own issues. I always have my issues. You know, I am an angry person. I am a moody person. I say things off the wall. People get mad at me. All of you have gotten mad at me at least once which we all have those realities. So, I'm not sitting there saying, "Oh, Look at me". None of us but most of us with all our heart want to stay faithful to God and His church and to protect our children and you need to know that we will do everything in our power; this Bishop is doing everything in his power to keep everything in the light. He's doing everything and we're doing everything. But, even when you do everything, it's a human church. There are humans here. There are evil people amongst us and they are even amongst our numbers and we gotta deal with that and as soon as we find out, we gotta pounce on it. But you gotta know that most are not like that. Think about the priests you've dealt with throughout the years and there have been very, very good priests. So we need to focus on the good.

What we need to do according to the gospel today is we fall, like I sat there literally and I'm reading all this stuff and I thought, "I don't know if I'd ever go back to church again if I was a Catholic." So first of

all, thanks for coming back because it's a hard reality even for you, I know. So we gotta know, though, why we do what we do. It isn't because of the people. It's because of the truth. Right? Jesus says, "I consecrate them in truth". Even in the midst of all the humanness and all the early church, it's the truth that keeps us focused. So, we as a church need to make sure we are focused now on Jesus and the truth, not on the humanity of some of its members because the truth doesn't change. The truth is still the same. It's still pure. It's still revelation of God.

Then in the midst of all that, the second reading gives us the second theme: that God is love and we gotta love each other through this. We gotta make sure that we stay strong. We gotta make sure that we bring healing to anyone who's been abused. We gotta make sure that never again does this kind of stuff happen. We gotta make sure of that.

But, today I just think we gotta deal with it. We gotta name it. We gotta apologize for it. We gotta say never again. We gotta say, "This isn't the church that God created" and it isn't the church that most of us have experienced.

So today, let us stay focused on Jesus and the truth. Let us bring healing to one another by our love for one another.

You got it? You get it? You gonna live it? May each of you know His love today and forever.
Amen.