

February 16, 2020 — Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A

Fr. Larry Richards

Good Morning! How are you?

There was so much to preach on and in today's readings. I'm thinking, okay, I can't figure on just one thing, I can't, I can't, but I got to. And so, we're are going to begin though in the first reading and the first reading here from the book of Sirach, God says to us before man are life and death, good and evil, which ever he chooses shall be given him. So, we do realize that the first penalty of all sin is God gives us what we want. Right? God gives you what you want that's the first penalty of sin. So again, let's say you commit adultery. God let you do that. He gave you the free will to make your own decisions. You make your decisions. Well there's consequences for that. Your spouse finds out, they divorce you, your kids find out, they hate you for the rest of their lives. And you say I can't believe God let that happen. And God says you chose it. So, I gave you what you wanted. But what you wanted had consequences. And the ultimate consequences of sin is death. Right? I give before you life and death. Good and evil. You choose. Whatever you choose that's what I'm going to give you.

So, we got to choose wisely first of all and then we got to make sure that we do what God's wants us to do. And that's where you know we read the short version of the gospel today because there is no way to just get in the part I really wanted. So, I'm going to read to you the part I want us to focus on in choosing what is good and choosing life. And I don't like this anymore than you do. Let me give you a hint. Because it talks about God brings everything into our hearts now. You know that sometimes we just look at our exterior thing no, no, let's go to your heart. He talks about you know when you make an oath just say yes or no. Don't go and do it for everything else. If you commit adultery you already started in your heart. You can commit adultery in your heart without every acting on it. Right? And then he talks about this anger thing. Hum! But I say to you whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. That's where it stops in today's gospel the short reading. But let's go on. And whoever says to his brother Raca will be answerable to the Sanhedrin. And whoever says you fool will be liable to fiery Gehenna. What's fiery Gehanna? Hell, yeah. Then listen to what God says to us because I don't think ninety-nine percent of the people in this church or the people who are listening to me now get this. If you bring your gift to the altar and there recall your brother has anything against you leave your gift at the altar. Go first and be reconciled with your brother. Then come and offer your gift. Settle you opponent quickly. Settle on the way to court, otherwise, your opponent will hand you over to the judge, the judge will hand you over to guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Now, not very good.

But you do realize as we focus on the reason the way the mass is set up like today when we have the sign of peace, what is the sign of peace for? It's not just for you to kiss your spouse which you can't do now anyway. You can't just regret each other and say I love you you're special. I love you; I love you; I love you. That has nothing to do with the sign of peace. Absolutely nothing to do with it. So, when I tell you we are not going to shake hands right now because of the because of the flu has nothing to do with that. The reason the sign of peace is put right before communion is because of this gospel. If when you bring your gift to the altar, Jesus Christ, you realized that someone has someone has something against you. Someone has not forgiven you. You have not forgiven. You are fighting with somebody. You're not talking to your sister or your brother, your husband, your wife, your mother, your father, if

you do that it says, before you bring that gift to the altar you go first and be reconciled, then you come back and then you can receive communion. Right? So again, let's say you're not talking to your brother, sister, mother, father, you haven't talked to a neighbor, you hate people, you refuse to forgive people, are you allowed to go to communion? NO! When you go to confession instead of just the oh yeah, I had a dirty thought, I did this, I did that, have you forgiven everybody? Because if the answers no even if I give you absolution you're not forgiven. Right? We got to really make sure we prepare ourselves to choose life that God offers us in the Eucharist. Because remember in 1 Corinthians it says if you have unworthiness in you, if receive the bread of life it becomes the bread of death.

So, if there's people in your heart and in your life, you refuse to forgive Eucharist isn't going to help you it's going to kill you. So, you got to make sure that you, you know, we just can't separate it. I wish we could. Because like I told you before I love God easily. I get up early. I do all the things. I obey the commandments he gives me. I do all that stuff. I can be very proud of that. And God says you can't because it's all his grace, I get it. But I'm not so good at loving others. Correct? Don't you agree so fast? But the reality is it's easy to love God. It's harder to love people who don't like you. That talk about you. That judge you and do all those things. It's hard. And God says I don't want to hear it. You can't separate your love for me than your love for others don't do it because whatever you do to least my brothers or sisters you do it to me. And the least is the least on our list. Not just the least in the world. Again, it's easier to take care of the poor but the least on your list. That person who hurt you fifty years ago you haven't talked to. The person in your family that drove you crazy today and you don't want to forgive. Those are the people that make it hard. Very hard. So, God is calling us to is this holiness of love. That before you and I go and receive communion God is love. So, I got to make sure if I'm going to receive the God of love, I got to be a person of love. And Jesus told us to love our enemies. He told us to love all those people that we don't like. We got to do it. So, today he gives us a simple thing. I give before you life and death. I'll give you whatever you choose. Choose wisely. Today decide to live this life of love. That before you receive communion you go through everyone in your life and if there is anyone you haven't forgiven, or anyone you haven't talked to, anyone you refuse to love, then before you receive communion today, that sign of peace, is a sign that I am at peace with everyone now. And I use the person around me as a way to express that. Again, it's not about kiss, kiss, I love you, look how great we are. It's about this a sign that before I give my gift to the altar, I am reconciled with everyone in my life. Are you reconciled with everyone in your life?

May each of you know His love today and forever, Amen.