

June 28, 2020 – 13th Sunday of Ordinary Time – Cycle A
Fr. Larry Richards

Good Morning - Good Morning, Father. And how are you? Blessed.

We listen to the Gospel and the readings today. God teaches us how to live – pretty simple. God teaches us how to live and we can take the whole Gospel and all the readings and put it down to this one verse: “Whoever finds his life will lose it; whoever loses his life for my sake will find it”. So, what God is calling us to is to live like him. The way to the life that Jesus lives. That’s what he is calling us to. Not to be focused on ourselves and what we need; to be focused on others and what they need. Right? And then he promises us that when this happens, we will get a reward. We will get a reward when we put people in front of us. And nowadays, more than ever, we need to be hearing this. Because, today in society it’s all about me. It’s all about me and making sure I have my rights and I can do what I want and... and people go crazy over this. And again, and again, when it comes to Christianity, and you’ve heard me say it a thousand times, Christianity is a forgetfulness of self, NEVER the focus on self. When you do focus on self, you will die. Nice thought....

And yet, people do it all the time. In the name of God, they focus on their religion, their Christianity, the way they follow God: I’m conservative, I’m a liberal, and it’s all about me and what I think. You will die. Gently, he said.

You and I are called to be more concerned about others than we are about ourselves. That’s what Jesus did. Whenever you’re wondering, “I wonder what I should do?” take a look at the crucifix. That’s what you should do. That’s what I should do. Really? Yes. That’s what Jesus did for you. He took your sins, he took my sins on the cross, and he paid for them. He wasn’t thinking about himself; he was thinking about you. It cost him his life. It cost him everything. And now, he says, if you seek your life you will lose it, but if you lose your life for my sake, if you live your life like me, you will find it.

In the first reading, we see Elisha and the woman. And the woman is more concerned about Elisha. Right? She sits there and says, “Come eat with me”. And then she says, “Hey, let’s take care of him. Let’s give him a little room here, with a.... it’s amazing, as I was reading this ...ok, we’ll give him a bed and we’ll give him a lamp and we’ll give him a chair and we’ll make sure everything is fine”. She was very concerned about him. And when she did that for him, Elisha thought “what can I do for her?” She needs a son. Ok, next year you’ll have a son.

When we become more concerned about others than we are about ourselves, we will be rewarded. But when we put ourselves first, we will not be. A couple weeks ago, I was with someone and someone asked if I would go see them and I said sure. It was just a social talk, it was just a social time. And when I went in, you know, I’m very big, and I’m very big about ... everybody should wear a mask. And why? For other people, not for yourselves. It’s not about whether you believe or you think it’s good. Studies have shown, again and again, it’s to take care of others. So I go crazy if I don’t see someone wearing one. I am one of those Nazis they talk about online, and that’s enough. You will put other people in front of you. Die to yourself. “I might get sick from this, Father.” Good. Then you’ll die and you’ll go to heaven. You understand? Put people in front of you. So, I go over to this person and the person meeting me, of course, wouldn’t wear a mask, and insisted on shaking my hand. And the first thing I thought? This person is not a Christian. Though they claim to be. Because they weren’t concerned at all about me. They were only concerned about themselves. Now, I didn’t say anything. I let it go. But I thought, “Is this what

Christians have come to? That it's more important what I think than the health of other people. It's more important how I do things than to put other people in front of me. The greatest thing that can happen is that we die for someone else to live. That's living the life of Christ. That's the call for all of us, people. We need to put other people in front of ourselves.

In Philippians 2 it says, "Though he was in the form of God, he emptied himself and became a slave". But, right before that, a beautiful prayer, it says, "Your attitude must be that of Christ". And before that, "others think humbly of themselves, as other people are more important than you" We need, at this time above all, to make sure that we are putting other people in front of ourselves. And when we do this, we will be rewarded. We don't do it for the reward, we do it to put others first and take care of others. But when we act like Jesus, not only will we be rewarded now, but guess what, we will live forever.

May each of you know his love, now and forever, Amen.