

July 12, 2020 – 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Cycle A
Father Larry Richards

Please be seated for the 45 minute homily. Don't laugh. Some of you haven't been around. It's my chance. Anyway, we listen today to the gospel and the 2nd reading – those are the things I am going to focus on today: the gospel and the 2nd reading.

In the gospel, we use the short version because it's bringing exactly what I want to talk about is that God plants His seed in us which is the Word of God. You gotta remember that the Word is not just the teaching. The Word is a person – Jesus Christ. So what happens is that Jesus Christ, He comes into our hearts and He needs to bear fruit. That's what shows that God is in our hearts, that Jesus there is the fruit that we bear, right? Now again, fruit is not for the person who has it. A tree, whether it be a peach tree, a cherry tree bears fruit for other people. So, when we come to church; when we do what we do for Jesus, we don't do it for ourselves. We do it for others. Again, as I've talked about the last weeks, take a look at the cross. Nothing on the cross was about Jesus. It was all about us and all about the Father. So we must live.

The first thing I gotta ask us for all to reflect on: Do I live my spirituality for me and my holiness or to save others or both – which would be ideal. Or, is it all about me and what I get to get and do I get to go to heaven. Now I know nobody here is like that or anyone who is listening, but of course nobody is. Again, we gotta sit there and think about, am I a person who wants everyone to be saved because I don't believe many people are. Again, even my mother years ago, if you heard the story, she said to me once, "Larry, if that person's in heaven, I don't wanna go." I said, "Don't worry mother, you won't" and that was like to my own mother so there's no hope for my salvation. Right? Some of you thought that anyway. The reality is heaven's a place where we're gonna love everybody. We're gonna love God. We're gonna love each other for ever and ever and ever and ever. Right? So we gotta learn that now. Our time on Earth is to learn how to love so we can live forever and ever and ever and ever. That means that we gotta be so concerned about others – especially during this time – we gotta be concerned about others.

Again, I told you a story years ago a priest called me and wanted to take me to task for something I said. Again, anytime I say anything people don't like it and they gotta take me to task. I get it and that's fine. But, he just sat there and he challenged me so again I like to challenge back just a little bit. I sat there and I said, because he was yelling about somethings, getting real intense. I said, "Father"

"Yes"

"Would you be willing to be damned so others could be saved?"

"Absolutely not. How dare you say that to me?"

I said, "Oh, St. Paul said he would,"

“What?”

“It is. It’s in Romans, Chapter 9, Verse 3 – you can look it up. Romans, Chapter 9, Verse 3.” I brought the bible just to make sure. This is called a bible – see that – bible. Anyway, so it says here; this is what St. Paul says in Romans, Chapter 9, Verse 3: I speak the truth in Christ. So it’s very clear – I’m speaking truth here. I do not lie. My conscious bears witness in the Holy Spirit. Verse 2: That there is great grief and constant pain in my heart. But, this is Roman, Chapter 9, Verse 3. Indeed, I could even wish to be separated from Christ for the sake of my brothers. Other translations just say, “I would be lost if my brothers could be saved.” Here is the great St. Paul saying that he would be cursed and never go to heaven if other people could get there.

Now of course, if you’d rather do that, would you go to hell? No, God is, it would be like “Whoa, here’s one of mine that learned to be like me. Here’s one of mine who knows what this is that the God of heaven left heaven, became a man and died to get us to heaven. He’s always more concerned about you and your eternal life than He is about Him and we gotta learn the same thing. We must learn that our salvation is given to us so that we can get others there too. One of the questions He’ll ask us is “Where are your brothers and sisters when you go before Him on judgment?” You can’t say, “Well, it was just heard enough for me to get there.” Wrong answer. So, we gotta sit that and know that and then in the midst of this, we go back to that second reading and it’s powerful for where we’re at today, correct?

Here again in Roman, Chapter 8, right before this, He says, “Brothers and sisters, I consider the sufferings of this time” and we have sufferings? It’s getting worse, it’s not getting better. Some people are getting like, “Oh, it doesn’t matter” but it’s getting worse. Again, just look at the news this morning. I consider the sufferings of the present time are nothing compared to the glory to be revealed for us. Again, it’s all about us. So, we have a choice. We can look at what’s going on now or we can look at Jesus in the future. Again, as I’ve talked about, we know how all this ends, correct? God wins. God isn’t like, “Oh, I don’t know what’s going on down there.” He knows exactly what’s going on, exactly. God is still in control.

So we gotta be there people of great hope. This past week, someone who used to be part of us years ago called the parish and said, “Fr. Larry is in a video. You gotta look at it. It’s not good.” He said, “You’re in a video. It’s not good. We already watched. It’s not good.” I’m like, have people nothing better to do. Anyway, I don’t even give you the credence of telling you but it was about one of the apparitions, a Marion apparition about the end times and how God’s gonna come and get us all an we’re all messed up and they have a picture of Cardinal Dolan on there and they photo shopped on there and you can tell, very easily. They photo shopped all these women around him that all the Cardinals have been bad and then he talks about how the bishops are bad and then they have, of all people, Bishop Barron. Now Bishop Barron is a pretty orthodox bishop. No, no, no, no, no. Then they have a picture of him and then they have the priests who have went bad and there’s a picture of me. Isn’t that nice? Now here’s people who don’t know me; who have heard about me so they’re either gossiping or they are going to do a retraction. Both of those things happen to be sin and they do it in God’s name and our

Blessed Mother's name – look how holy we are and they try to scare people into the faith. Now, if you convert and are scared into the faith, who do you love: God or yourself? Yourself – because anything that tried to scare you into the faith isn't of God because it helps you love yourself more, not God more or others.

Again and again, when all this stuff is happening, we gotta go back to what does Jesus Christ say not what some seer says, not what someone else says. What does Jesus say? Jesus says all people; know you're my disciples how? Because you love one another. Period. That's what Jesus says. Well, this seer said this and this apparition says that. I don't care. I don't care. I don't care. I care about Jesus Christ. He's the one that died for us. He's the one that saves us and He's the one that gives us hope for eternal life.

One of the things it talks about in the second reading is that we need to be hope. So, instead of piling on and giving me garbage and talk about how bad it is; we've gotta be the ones to give hope to the world. God is in control. Do not be afraid. Remember the great story about the little boy who is in the ship and there is a great storm going on and everybody thinks everybody is going to drown and everybody is going crazy and this little boy is just very peaceful and having a fine time that they go up to him and say, "Aren't you afraid?".

He goes, "Oh no."

"How can you not be afraid?"

"Because my dad's the captain. Fear is an insult to my father."

What does the second reading talk about? We are children of God. So if we are focused on ourselves and all afraid of what's gonna happen, fear is an insult to my Father. But, if we look at our Father, if we look at Jesus who has come to live within us, that we can bear fruit, we have nothing to worry about. We can be filled with hope. We don't have to try scare the world and judge everybody and put people's pictures on videos of who don't agree with us and go "They are all mean and going to hell." Well, maybe but not because you said it. We need to be bringing hope turned to God. He loves you. He gave His Son to die for you. Once you accept Jesus, you become His beloved son or daughter.

So, look at your Father. Is He not going to take care of you? Does He not love you? Then trust Him. Do not be afraid, trust Him. He holds you and me and everything will be OK because of what Jesus did. So today, don't get lost with everybody else and when everybody tries to get you afraid, you say very clearly, "Fear is an insult to my Father."

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