

25th Sunday Ordinary Time,

September 20, 2020

Fr. Larry Richards

Good Morning! And, how are you? Blessed indeed!

So, there's a lot I can preach on today, as always, but I'm going to just focused on primarily and will hit the other readings, on the Second Reading and just the last line of the Second Reading. So Paul's talking about you know he doesn't know whether it's better to live or die. He is willing to do either. He says the dying is the better way. Right? But after he says all this, he says, "Only conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

So, what we're called to do is to give glory to God's name, if you will, by the way we live and to not make Jesus blush. You know often I think in my own life how I've made Jesus blush. You know maybe you have too and He looks at the way I act or the way other's act and say their Christian's. If He can, He would still blush in heaven. He has got to blush at us at sometimes.

And what we got to do is like today when we say the Lord's Prayer, when we say hallowed be Thy name, we're saying that God let me, by the way I live my life, hallow Your name. So, when people look at me may they praise God that I am an example of You. But, don't let them look at me and curse Your name because I say I follow You and this is the way I act. Right?

Now often in the today's Catholicism and Christianity we act like Old Testament people. Now let me clarify that first. The God in the Old Testament and the God in the New Testament are the same God, right? We don't have an old God and a new God. But God the way He deals with us and the way that we have dealt with Him has been purified and fulfilled, right? It uses to be if you were caught in adultery, what happened? You were stoned. That was the law, right?

Now Jesus changed that by the way He lived, and the way treated someone. He said, "You without sin be the first one to cast the stone," right? It used to be in the old law that you could not eat bacon. Now, people, almost everybody here eats bacon, and you enjoy it. They could kill you in the Old Testament for that kind of stuff. So, our life must be transformed. So, we got to really believe and think about, I'm I doing this in the way of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Good News of Jesus Christ? Am I being Christ in the world? I can fall in and say quote Old Testament passages that means that you can't eat blood. There are all kinds of stuff.

If you want to go Old Testament, go completely Old Testament, don't pick and choose. But we are called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our actions. So, what does it mean? First of all, if you listen to the opening prayer, it was Lord, You summed up all the commandments in what? Do you know? Love of You and love of others. You know one of my favorite songs out, and I think this is going to be on the front of our bulletin, it says together loving Jesus and others. I hated it from since the beginning, you know. But what I want to use this song title called Love God, Love People. That' the summation of what it is to be a follower of Jesus. You love God and you love people.

So, when I stand before God am I a person that chose that I loved God and that I love people? And again, the way that is in the First Reading and the Gospel is it talks both there. "For let him turn to the Lord for mercy, to our God Who is generous and forgiving." In the Gospel after we see all the stuff, it talks about salvation in the Gospel. This is grace. And it's about the end of time. Who do we know went to heaven first as I asked you a hundred thousand times after Jesus Christ? The good thief. So, here's the person here and he says, "Are you envious because I'm generous?" That God is generous with mercy. God is generous with compassion. God is generous with love. So, what does that mean? I need to be generous with mercy, generous with love, generous with my money, generous because that's who God is.

Now again I told you the story about, this parable of course, but it's about at the end of the world when Jesus brings everybody in front of Him, everyone to be judged. And then Jesus, Who is mercy and love, tells the angels, "You go tell everybody that I in My mercy, since I paid for their sins, I'm going to let everybody into heaven. Everybody gets to come." And the people that knew they were going to be damned are rejoicing and the people who are righteous and expecting God to do for them and damn the others start to complain. And they are the ones instantly damned, because they did not know, they did not give, they were not generous with God and mercy.

Now, it's a parable. It is not the teaching of the Church. But You know, what people get crazy over is once I gave a homily years ago at St. Luke's and one of the people I said to, "You know it's great. You're going to be saved by what God did for you, not by what you do for them. And this woman came in, she was a daily mass goer, and she says, "Then why should I do anything Father?" I said, "You do it because you love. You do what you do because you love Jesus."

You know at the end of my life, I've been a virgin my whole life 60 years so far, and when I come before God and I'm not going to be sitting there saying, "Hey God, you know I was a virgin my whole life and how about those others pagans who weren't? You are going to let them come to heaven too?" If I had it my way everybody would get there. No matter what! You know it doesn't matter. I don't do what I do just to be better than others and let them you know let them be damned and let me go to heaven. Look everything I did for Jesus. I don't care.

I've been a virgin my whole life for love of Jesus. Not because it's a rule, not because I had to. I didn't have to be a priest, except for this is what God wanted me to do. I regret not one moment of following Jesus Christ. Not one! If He let's everybody in at the end, praise God that He would be so generous and forgiving. He doesn't have to worry about me saying that's just not fair. I'm just as much of need of mercy just as everybody else. Oh, thank you Lord! But again, we live that way by living people. We do what we do because we're in love with Jesus Christ. Period! And we're in love with other people. Period! That's only conducting ourselves in the way worthy of the Gospel of Jesus. So today let's learn generosity. Let's learn that I will do what I do because I love God and I love other people. When you and I do that completely, then we'll long for heaven as St. Paul does and we'll long that everybody else gets to go there too. Not just us, who are righteous. Got it! Get it! Going to live it! May each of you know His love today and forever! Amen!