

November 22, 2020 – Christ the King – Cycle A
Fr. Larry Richards

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

Now again, I've talked about this reading for the last month. I've inserted it in, to prepare us for the feast of Christ the King. Because this is the King. This is what the King is like. This is how the King will judge us at the end of our life. And so, this King is a King of love. Right? As we've talked about, his kingdom is the kingdom of love. And to enter into that kingdom, we need to learn to be like him, and to treat others like him. Because...if it was him. Because, as St John at the Cross said, at the end of our life, we will be judged by love. By the God of love, by how we love.

Now again, as I hear confessions throughout the years, here and, usually...when we get to the last question, 90% of the people who come to me ask for the questions, and I say "do you consistently take care of the poor?" Only about 50% of those, and 50% might be generous, say, "Oh, yes, Father." And some say, "oh, yes, Father, I do what I can". That doesn't mean anything to me. Because everyone can give 10% of their income. And that's what you can do, and that's what you must do, by the command of God. And God blesses you when you do that. I'm not asking anybody to give a dime to the church. That's not what this is about. I'm asking you to do as God commands you, because when you drop dead and you stand before God, the God who will judge you, will tell you today how he will judge you. That's why - it drives me crazy. People come and they say, "no, I didn't do that", "no, I didn't do that", did you take care of the poor, "no, I didn't do that either", like it's no big deal. You could be damned forever if you don't take care of the poor. Right? It's just that simple.

Matt Kelly, a couple of years ago, when he asked me to write the book on mercy, asked me to write the chapter on taking care of the poor, I said, the opening line of that chapter was, we must take care of the poor or be damned. Now everybody knows that Fr. Larry wrote that chapter. Pretty simple. And I say that strongly so you can let that enter into you. You must, to be saved. This isn't salvation by works. It's showing that Jesus Christ lives inside of you so much that you're more concerned about other people than you are about yourself. Because if you don't consistently do that, Christ does not live inside of you, nor do you see Christ in others. That's the point. So we've got to sit there and surrender our lives so fully to Jesus, so I automatically give to God what belongs to him, I automatically take care to the poor.

So when I ask, you say, of course, I do, Father. You give at least 10%.

So is the first thing I want you to do. Starting next week, because that starts the new year. If you do not consistently take care of the poor, you must. You must go online and find a place where you are going to start doing it. I've talked before about Haiti180, which is an orphanage in Haiti that Shaun Forrest runs. You just go to Haiti180, you can do it, start being a \$15/month tither. 15 bucks a month. Or Unbound, or whatever it happens to be. If you don't consistently build it into you life, that you give whatever you give give to God first, and then take for yourself last, you will be blessed! Don't you get it? Those of you don't feel blessed, it's usually because you're not generous. You give what you can, instead of what you must. Must is different. One of them believes in God, one does not. Right? Because. I better to take care of myself first, because no one else does. If you put others and God first, God promises to take care of you. That's a promise. Try him on that. I've never seen anyone who gives to God first in need. I've only seen people who always look at gimme, gimme, gimme, who are always in need, because never put anyone else first. So, we must do that. This is how you will be judged. And you're not going to be able to say, well, I didn't know. Because God will say to you, I sent you the loudest mouthed priest in the universe, and I told you. And you

said, well, that's just Fr. Larry. Yep, he did what I told him to. So I'm doing it. Between now and next week, you must, if you don't already, you must sign up to do something.

And the second thing we need to do is take care of the poor when we see them. That's all. Just this past week, I was going out to do something, and I was going down Peach Street, and at the **Armory**, there's always someone there. And there was a cop in front of me, so he was trying to be not showing, but I gave him some money. I always keep ones in my pocket. You know, I get a big stack of ones and I keep them there, just so when I'm at that particular thing. You don't have to give ones. You can give quarters if you don't have. But never pass anyone without nothing. And then, on Friday night, same day, I was sitting there in my room, watching TV, and I hear someone spitting outside. You know, those big spits....I'm not going to do it for you. And you know, I look out, and there's this Afro-American woman there, and she looked like she was 100, but she was only 58, she had a hard life. And there were 2 Sisters of the Work, you know we have great Sisters of the Work on the work here, in Erie, we have 4 of them. And there were 2 of them there, and they were going into adoration, and this woman asked if they could get her some food. And of course, they did, they went down to McDonalds and they got her hot chocolate and everything. And I see this happening and I go out to see if I can do anything. And so the first thing the woman says to me is "Father, you got \$5?" Reminds of somebody else, who used to be here all the time. And, I said, "no, I don't have \$5, here, I got \$10." Oh....you would have thought it was Christmas. And, we tried to get her housing. She didn't want it. I called all the places, and we got her housing. And she didn't want it. And then, she saw the police and she ran away. But, that was Jesus. It doesn't take us much for us to go out of our way for others. And some people will sit there and say, as I've said before, oh, if I give that person money, they're going to drink on it. Right? And, I've told you before, you give money every week to the parish, and I get paid by the parish, and I get paid, and I drink on it sometimes. I do. I go out and I buy my Captain Morgan, and I'll have a drink. Last night, I had a drink. And so, I'm drinking on your money. Just a thought. You encourage me. I didn't drunk, c'mon...I had one shot with my Diet Coke. But, the reality is, it's not our job to be judging what they're going to do with our money. Our job is to be generous. Everyone here can afford a dollar. Yes, you can. It doesn't cost that much, a cup of coffee costs more, unless you go to McDonald's. The other day someone gave me a card for Starbucks. So I went to Starbucks and got a cup of coffee. Do you know how much a cup of coffee costs at Starbucks? \$5.60. Now, we can gladly spend that on ourselves, can't we? And that goes in one end and out the other in about an hour, right? You know, we know what coffee makes us do. But the reality is, to give a dollar to somebody else who's poor? Oh, I can't be bothered, who know what they're going to do with that money. Our job is to treat everybody like Christ. Sometimes I do that really well. Sometimes I don't do that well at all. But it's got to be my goal. So that, when you and I stand before God, on judgment, we hear, come you who are blessed by the Father. When we take care of others, we are blessed. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. To enter into the kingdom, we must learn to love. And not just the people in our family, but all God's children. The least of our brothers and sisters in the world. This is what it means for our King. He tells us what it will mean for us when we die.

So, today, let's begin. If we don't consistently take care of that poor, we start by next week for the new year. That's our resolution, spiritually. And we carry some stuff around with us, so we can always take care of another, even if it's a dollar, a quarter, whatever. They're a human being and that human being is Jesus Christ. What ever we do to them, or don't do to them, we do or don't do, for Jesus.

Got it? Get it? Gonna do it? You better.

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