

Fr. Larry Richards
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Today, we listen to the word of God speaking to us, and of course the first reading and the gospel always go hand in hand. And, Moses is told by God “I will raise up a new prophet who will speak in my name. But, anyone who speaks in their own name and says it’s from me, they will die.” Just a nice thought. You know, throughout the years – and I have talked about this before here – so often, it used to be – no one lately in the last couple of years – used to come to me and say “Father, God told me to tell you.” Really? “I just spent an hour with Him, and He didn’t say that to me, that’s amazing, hmmm.” So, sometimes we go and we proclaim God’s word, because we are proclaiming our own agenda. “Well, this is what I want” is what we should say! And we put it in God’s name, “But this is what God wants, He told me to tell you this.” Really? Well, if I wasn’t a man of prayer, if I wasn’t surrendering my life, or I wasn’t, then I would say “ok, maybe there is something there.” But so often, it is our own opinion we are pushing, and I could do that too! That is why it is only important as we speak with the authority of Christ, huh? Remember years ago I told you, and you’ve heard this story at least a thousand times about when I was doing my 24-hour prayer period, and in the midst of it all I sat there and I came to know that God said to me “you are my beloved Son.” And I even looked at Him and I said “thank you Lord.” Changed my whole life, everything changed from that moment. And then that night I had a dream, and in my dream everyone was home in Pittsburgh, and everybody was possessed - proud, arrogant and aggressive Richards came to the scene, and what do I start doing? Just like Jesus did today, but there was a big difference. I start casting out these demons. “In the name of Jesus...” But what did they do to me? They laughed! Not to Jesus today, but to me, they laughed, and the more I screamed, the more they were possessed and all my friends and relatives were possessed, until he started possessing me. And then in the midst of it, I hear God the Father say the same thing to me in my prayer as I heard in my dream – “Larry, he can’t do this to you. You are my beloved Son.” And as soon as I accepted that, the devil screamed and left me, and again, it is a dream and it can be weird, because then I went to all my relatives and touched them and said “you are God’s beloved Son, You are God’s beloved daughter,” and the devil would scream and leave and then I woke up. Well, last night because I spoke in Steubenville on Friday – I spoke at the whole school at Steubenville, and then I spoke to the men. I had the Mass for them at 5 PM for everybody in the school, then I had the men at 8:30 PM and I talked about what it means to be a man. And so, when I came home yesterday, I didn’t get to do my holy hour yet. So, I did my holy hour late last night, then I came home and I had Mass about 11:30 last night here at the back altar. And then, I went to bed. And last night I had a dream, again. I hate when those type dreams come upon me. Because again, last night it took the second part of my dream 20 years ago! Because what happened, again I was somewhere, I don’t remember exactly where I was, but I opened the door, and the door went down to the basement. And as soon as I opened the door, the devil was right there. And he came at me! And what do I start doing? Oh, I don’t cast him out anymore! I’m beyond that! I just grabbed him and I start saying Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. And the devil exploded, it was a great thing to see, because I was all excited! “Look at that Jesus! Wow that was nice!!!” And then, everybody else ran!

But you see, why do you think that was so important for me last night? It was because it was the gospel! The authority over demons doesn't come from us – it comes from Jesus. We have to know who we are – that we are sons and daughters of the Father, but the reason that we are sons and daughters of the Father is because of??? Jesus! And the authority comes from? Jesus! And what has to happen in our lives if – get this – where Jesus was today! When He was preaching, where was He preaching? In the Synagogue! In the church! And in that church, there was one possessed! There might have been many who were possessed! And when the teaching of the authority of God was proclaimed, the person who was possessed started to...complain!! The person who was possessed started to complain against the authority of the teaching. Because the truth is being proclaimed they think “whoa, who is this person that has this authority?” And then, the devil starts to “who are you, we know who you are, get out of here....” Well, in our own hearts and in our own lives, in our own church, there are places where we are still disobedient to the authority. Now, there are different authorities, of course. There is opinion, or there is the Roman Catholic teaching of the church that has the authority of God, and so what happens is so often – nobody here, I hope – that come before God and pick and choose what they will believe. And when you pick and choose of the authority of God in the church, you have a demoniac within you! You have a demon that sits there and is under disobedience and we all know that all sin is ultimately disobedience to God! God speaks today, not through you and me ourselves, He speaks through Christ in us, but the place where Christ is most present is where? In the authority of the teaching of the church! And so, what you and I have to do is sit there and constantly be re-surrendering our lives to the authority of God which is present there. We can say, with authority, and again, someone says about me again the other day “you know, he can be arrogant.” And again, if I'm preaching the authority of what the church teaches, there is no arrogance there. None – it is truth! Believe it, or don't, but you don't get to pick and choose. We can say with authority you cannot be catholic and believe in killing children. You cannot believe in abortion and call yourself a catholic! You might disagree with that, but you are wrong! The authority of God says you can't be! He doesn't ask your opinion! It's that simple! You cannot sit there and say “I am follower of Jesus Christ, but I believe that you can use artificial birth control.” You can't, because you are wrong! You are taking your authority and placing it over the authority of God and saying “I'll listen to myself more than I'll listen to authority.” It is a demoniac! You can sit there and say “marriage is forever, all the days of my life, as long as I believe it” and say you are right, but you are wrong! You can't – you made a promise, a vow before almighty God until death do us part! Period - that is the authority of God! You can do what you want with it, but this is what God says. So somewhere in our hearts and in our lives, we have to sit there and start thinking “am I living Christianity my way? Am I trying to fit God and His authority into what I want in life? Or am I taking my life and putting it under the authority of God, even when it causes me discomfort, even when I don't agree with it.” Because it doesn't matter whether you and I agree with it. If we don't place ourselves under the authority of God, we are going to start trying to make God speak the authority of my life, and that will bring a curse upon us as we hear in the first reading. So, today, it is a hard teaching isn't it? Don't you hate when I get all riled up? But the reality is, that somewhere we have to stop thinking that I can have it my way and follow Christ. We can't have it our way. We have to die to ourselves and make sure we are always doing it His way.

He is the authority. And you and I – every one of us here - have a demon in us somewhere. I do. You do. There are things that you and I agree with sometimes about the church, aren't there? You know there are. Me too. But what you and I have to do today is take that demon inside of me and place it under the authority of Jesus and say "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus cast out this demon within me. Jesus, cast out this demon within me." And Jesus, under His authority will do that, but when you give Him that demon, He wants everything with it. He wants you to fully put yourself under His authority. And to place yourself under the authority of Jesus is to place yourself under the authority of the church. Remember I told you a couple of weeks ago I got an e-mail from somebody and he says "I believe that the church is wrong in this regard, and I believe that I am right because He tells me this in prayer." If it comes between wondering if you are right or the church is right – who do you think is right? The church. That applies to me too. We don't like that sometimes, but that is the way it is. And that is spoken with authority. Are there any questions? May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.