

July 16, 2006
Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Fr. Larry Richards

Are ya hot enough? Ya...it's the humidity. But, I have my aunt here and my mother came up from Pittsburgh! My Aunt Bernie and my Mama! My Aunt Bernie is 90 now! Ha, Ha, Ha, boy that's old, isn't it? But anyways, so, as we come and we listen to the gospel today, and we are going to spend time with that here in a moment, but I want to spend time on the second reading. And the second reading, again, I don't like the translations, but we will be re-translating here soon, according to our Bishop, but...we say this always in the Office, and it says "God chose us and Him, Jesus, before the world began, to be holy and blameless in His sight, to be filled with life." That is the second reading. "God chose us and His Son before the world began, to be holy and blameless in His sight." Now, again if I ask you "are you good people," everybody here – I don't know one person who would sit there and say "I'm not a good person" unless you have a bad self-image, and that is not of God, stop it. Everybody here believes they are good people, but that is not the question. The question is "are you a holy person?" That is the question, because, again if we spend time in Hebrews or Peter, it says "strive for that holiness without which you will not see God." Now, holiness is not something you do – it is who you are. It is who you are in Christ, right? Its when "in Christ, we are holy..." So if I ask you "are you holy..." what should be the answer? "Yes, Father." You are holy not because of you, but because of Jesus. But what has to happen is you and I need to seek that and want that and surrender ourselves to that! Now, I know that to most people here what I am saying is completely oblivious. You know, it doesn't make any difference to them, "oh, ya, here Father goes again..." You know, when I was in the seminary, that is the reason I was thrown out, because of my preaching, because of the Franciscan, who when I said "we are all called to be saints," my first homily... "we are all called to be saints..." and you could tell he was mad and as soon as I was done, he pounded that desk and he looked at me and he said "first of all, I don't want to be a saint, second of all, who are you to tell people that that they are called to be saints?" So, here is a little priest who didn't want to be a saint. And you might sit there and say the same thing to me. "Father-no saint. I mean, I'll try to get to heaven, but no saint!" Well then you are going against the will of God, and so was that priest, because God said, in that second reading "God chose us in Him before the world began..." That means before you were created, before I was created, before the world was created...and why did He create you? To be holy and blameless in His sight. So, if you don't want to be holy, you are going against the will of God. He chose you to be holy and blameless. And again, that is who we are. So what we have to do first of all is want that. Because you have to make sure in your heart that you want to be a saint! And if not, you don't leave here today until you say to God "I want to be a saint." Because that is His will for you. So, first thing. But second, if you listen to the gospel, He sent them out how? Two by Two.

If you and I are going to be holy, it's not going to be by ourselves, it is going to be because other people are challenging us to be holy. We need to have people in our lives that we are accountable to, that we sit there and they ask us "how are you doing in holiness? Is your goal to be holy?" Because again, like I was saying at the other Masses, I'm sure no one this summer went to your picnics and all these other things, you didn't all sit there and talk about at your picnics, "well, how am I going to be holy? Would you help me be holy? I need to be holy." Would you? Even at St. Joe's – Bread of Life? People don't talk about that at their picnics? Really? But, that's what we're called to do, that's what we are supposed to be doing...oh, Doug does! "Oh, I do, I do!" Well, everybody else, ok...let's all go to Doug's house after Mass, because we're going to talk about holiness over there! But anyway...he has these big ugly Emus and he kills the chickens, but that is all beside the point!!! The reality is...can you be holy and have an Emu? Maybe, but the reality is – that is God's call for us – to be holy and blameless – it's not what we do – it's who we are! We have to want it – we have to ask for it – and we have to help others to challenge us to accept us in Christ Jesus – to surrender our lives to Christ Jesus - that it is His holiness in my life – not my holiness and what I do. Got it? Get it? Gonna do it? Better! May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen!