

### **Fr. Larry's Homily – March 16, 2008, Palm Sunday**

Good morning. Another Lent is almost over by the grace of God, and we begin the holiest of weeks. You know, and this is the time when I go from place to place and I do missions, and about once a week any more I've been doing the Passion talk. And when you do the Passion talk the same as when we just heard the Gospel of the Passion people respond different ways. Once I had a bigger gentleman in up in the diocese of Manchester walked out in the middle of the talk. Heh, surprise. At the end of another one the young priest was there and he said, "Where was the love?" Surprise. You know I was talking to a friend of mine who was talking about a guy – this guy is a Brother and he was talking about this other guy who's a Deacon and he has a crucifix in his office. "And the guy's gotta be nuts," the Brother said, "Because, you know, it's one of those bloody crucifixes. Anyone who'd have that kind of devotion, they've got to be nuts." Surprise.

How do you respond to the Passion when you hear it? One of the things I think that's helpful is if we put ourselves, we place ourselves in the Passion, and figure out where are we? And we could really place ourselves almost anywhere there, huh? Sometimes we're the judges. We judge the people that can't be of God and different things like the High Priest did. Sometimes we're just a member of the crowd. We cry out, "Crucify Him!" with everybody else because, well everybody else is doing it. And because everybody else is doing it then it's got to be okay, I'll do it too. I don't want to be separated and all by myself. Sometimes we're the people that cry out, "Let His blood be upon me!" because there's righteousness about us. "Yea, I'll take it. Let His blood be upon me and upon my children." Huh? Sometimes we're the people that are actually beating Him, right? The way we pick on others sometimes, put others down, make fun of them, gossip about them – whatever it is. Sometimes we're one of the apostles that are more concerned about our skin than they are about Jesus. Every apostle that was there – every single apostle was more concerned about themselves than they were about Jesus.

And that's what I want to focus on, because the apostles were the good people. Huh? And sometimes when we listen to the Passion we forget this is all about love, and it should have an affect on us. But so often it doesn't. So often it just becomes, "Oh, this is a long Gospel." Or, "Oh do I have to listen to this again." It's the only time we have this, it's once a year unless you go to the Good Friday service, right? It's the only time you'll hear the Passion, the whole Church year. And yet some people just go through, "oh how many more pages do we have left? Oh, okay. Yea one more page" – instead of letting this enter into our being. This is someone who did everything for love of us. And what it should invoke from us is gratitude, not guilt. Gratitude that we should have such a thankful heart that, "Jesus, You did all of this for

me. Jesus, you loved me so much that you'd go through all that suffering, all that pain for me." And what it should go even deeper is that it should come and invoke in us, "Jesus, as you died for me, I want to give my life for you." That's what it should invoke from all of us, is the gratitude that wants to give back as much as we have received.

And so as we enter this holiest of weeks, we've got to sit there and think, "Is that where I'm at? Is there where I want to be at? Am I willing to follow Jesus if it costs me everything?" And to do that every day, huh? To sit there and think, "You know, okay Lord, I'm very busy today but you know what? It doesn't matter that I'm busy today, because I give up my life for you. Which means, Lord, I have that committed prayer time with you every day." "Oh but Father, you don't understand! I'm so busy! I'm such a busy person! I've got this happening..." I know. But when it comes between you and Jesus, Jesus lost. Because you're very busy. Oh my, I know. Wow, I feel so bad. How hard it is for us to have that daily committed time with the Lord. We're tired like the apostles were. And Jesus says, "Can't you wait with me for one hour? Can't you give me an hour?"

With adoration, you know we sit there and do that. And a lot of times people sit there and say, "Well I give Jesus an hour, Father. I go to that 11 o'clock Mass – sometimes that's over an hour!" (\*claps\*) Very happy. The reason a lot of us go to Mass is because we're afraid of going to hell. And to miss Mass on Sunday is a mortal sin, so I don't want to miss Mass on Sunday because I'll go to hell. Which means what? We love ourselves. It's still all about me! Okay I'll go to Mass so I can go to heaven. Well what about giving Him an hour, and sitting there and spending that hour with Him in the Eucharist. "Well, Father, you don't understand. It's too hard for me." Really, it's so hard? Yes I know. It's hard to wake up in the middle of the night. Yes I know. It's hard to sit there and carve that time. Yes I know. But we do it for other things – why can't we do it for the Lord? Why does it come always that I'm more important than Christ? Why? What Jesus wants of you and me is just love.

If you listened to the second reading today, Jesus gave up everything for you and me. Though He was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave. A slave to who? Us. We killed Him. Us. He gave everything for us. Will you give everything for Him? And if the answer in your heart today is, "Yes! Of course I would!" then prove it. Prove it. Don't just say it. Anybody can say it. I can say it, you can say it – prove it! What does He want of you. Give it to Him! This week, if you want this week to be a holy week, every day do one act of selflessness. Not for anybody else, we've already talked about that. Do one act of selflessness for Jesus. Every day this week. Make this week a holy week. Give Him the gift of yourself. And not just wake up and say, "Okay, Lord, You've got my life." Peh, that's nice. What are you going to do to prove He's got your life? Maybe it's going to spend more time with Him. Maybe it's going to

come and sit with Him in the Church. Maybe it's going to be coming to one of the services you've never been to. Maybe it's going to be to spend time with the Passion and the Scriptures. Maybe it's going to be to take this Philippians chapter two and meditate on it every day this week and think, "Jesus, if You did this for me, may I do this for You and may I do this forever. May I become a slave. May I give my life, Lord."

Another thing you can do every day this week to make it a holy week is have a heart of gratitude. Lord, thank you. Thank you, Lord. Every day this week you say thank you. This is a time to be focused not on ourselves this holy week. This is the time to be focused on Jesus. Could you imagine if you see somebody, and you know they're suffering in front of you, and they're dying in front of you and they're doing it because they love you. And you say, "Well you know, I happen to have a headache today too." And you call the attention to yourself. "And you know, and I've got this too." And you call the attention to yourself. What an insult that would be and how bad that would be. We wouldn't even do that with other people.

So this week is the week we celebrate and we enter into the Passion with Jesus. Make this a holy week. Every day this week do something just for Jesus, Who did everything just for you. May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.