

July 1, 2018 -13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle B

Fr. Larry Richards

Good Morning! And how are you? (Blessed!) Very blessed that we have this baptism of little Lawrence Christopher here this day at this mass. And it reminds us that what we give this child, Lawrence Christopher, on the day of his baptism, is the gift of Life. The gift of Healing. And this happens by the faith of the community, in the faith of the parents, huh? That is why we can baptize children, because of our faith.

But when we get to the Gospel today, the Gospel is a great Gospel, huh? It talks about healing and life. And how this is what God wants to do. He gives us healing and life. Now sometimes people sit there and think of God as just wanting us to suffer. You know I once had a, one of my spiritual directees, he says “Father, I don’t suffer enough. I’m going to pray that I suffer more.” I said “don’t you dare. I forbid you to pray that you get more suffering in your life.” Well he disobeyed me, of course, and God got him. He might’ve had hangnail or something and he cried for three weeks. You know we think that we need more suffering in our life. If you think you need more suffering, come up here, I’ll hit ya. Ya got it? I’ll give ya some suffering. That’ll be as simple as it is. Don’t ever pray for suffering! Pray for healing and life. Now suffering will come to all of us, it’s part of love. Love of God and love of neighbor. If you give your life away, you’re gonna suffer. But it’s a joyful suffering. We don’t go and have this suffering that keeps us focused on ourselves.

But one of the people called me this past week on my radio show and he was talking about, you know, the miracles that used to happen, like today in the Gospel, and in the Acts of the Apostles there are miracles that happen and he says “how come that doesn’t happen anymore?” You know, and everybody’s looking for an out and he says “how come the popes can’t do that?” And I say, “well, they have,” but anyway, I says “the problem I think in society today is that we don’t have humility and we don’t have faith.” And that’s what was necessary today in the Gospel, right? To get this life, to get this healing, was they fell before Jesus – they had humility – and they had faith. Nowadays people do not have faith and they’re more of a skeptic and everything, you know?

My friend, Jim McCarthy, sent me a...oh, what do you call it...you know, one of those... articles yesterday that some priest in Virginia wrote and it talks about the end of the Catholic Church. And he was going on and on and on, this priest, about “the reason the Church is gonna end, and the reason we’re losing people is because people are receiving communion in the hand, first. It’s because people aren’t keeping holy the Sabbath and the Lord God says keep holy the Sabbath!” Well, we forget that the Sabbath was a Saturday and the church changed it. We go to church on Sunday because it’s a precept of the church, not because of the Ten Commandments, just as an aside, ‘cause we changed it’s no longer the Sabbath, it’s now the Lord’s Day, correct? And we go to church because it’s the precept of the Church, but that’s all beside the point. But what we do is we focus on the externals. The problem with the Church today is a lack of humility and a lack of faith. THAT’S the problem. It goes way deeper than the

people that receive communion on the hands, please. We simplify things to make it fit into our agenda. The way WE think the Church should be. But what we need to be doing is knowing what I have to do is learn humility before God. We all have to humble ourselves. I don't care how you receive communion, but you better have a heart that's on your face before Jesus before you do it. You humble yourself.

Then you have to believe that God is good. That God loves you. That God is always in your best interest. For eternal life. You know, remember why did God make me? He made me to know Him, love Him and serve Him so I can be happy forever with Him. God always wants our best, our good. He always wants to bring us healing and He wants to bring us life. But each of us need to come before Him with humility and faith, that He can do anything. And that's the gift we give little Lawrence Christopher today. He doesn't have faith yet. He can't do it. Not old enough. It's OUR faith. The faith of this family. The faith of this community. That we give him this gift. And we tell him, in humility and faith, that "Lawrence, God wants your healing, always. He wants to give your life, always." And that's the gift He gives him today. He heals him forever, from original sin. And He gives him forever, the gift of eternal life. The gift that God gave all of us. And it didn't end the day we were baptized. It needs to grow. So today, let's truly pray that each of us have that gift of humility and faith. We know and believe that God is out for our good. That He wants to heal us, He wants to love us forever, by giving us life forever with Him in heaven. And we rejoice that begins today with little Lawrence Christopher. We will be doing that very soon in this very church.

May each of you know His love today and forever, Amen.