

July 29, 2018 – 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle B  
Fr. Larry Richards

Father Larry: “Good morning! And how are you?”

(Congregation: “Blessed!”)

We are so blessed especially with this Gospel today. Huh?

I love this Gospel, and I’ve told you before, years ago this Gospel came up because it talks about the miracles of God. And years ago when Bishop Trautman was our Bishop, and before he retired, we were down at Father Yales’ funeral. He had died around Christmas before in early December. The Bishop said, “So, Father Larry, Are you coming to the Days of Recollection?” for the priests and the religious come together twice a year. I said, “Nope, I’m not going!” “Why aren’t you going?” “Because they’re all liberal and I can’t take the stuff. You always have some liberal up there speaking about whatever, and I just get mad, and it’s better if I don’t go.” And he says, “I thought you’d go out of respect for me.” (ahhhhh) So, of course, I go. So, as I go there is a sister up there who is the presenter, and this is a Day of Recollection. She was sister from one of the sisters here in Erie, and I won’t use her name because I can’t remember it anyway, but the reality is that she got up and used this gospel and then she says as I’ve told you before, “We all know there was no miracle that happened here. He made the people share.” And I’m like “hmmmm”. I looked over at the Bishop. He looked over at me. He was very angry at this time, because he almost stood up and said, “Shut up it’s not true!” And then right after the thing he goes, “I was so mad!” I go, “You were mad?”

This is what happens when we take the power out of the gospel! When we don’t believe in miracles then there is no power, and if there is no power I would be afraid. Then the God we follow can’t do squat. The God we follow can’t keep us alive forever. The God we follow and pray to can do nothing. So, you have to watch when you dismiss miracles. I don’t know this, but the woman/the nun who preached it this way because she had never experienced a miracle in her life. If you have never experienced a miracle, you can’t believe in miracles. If you can’t believe in miracles, you have to do something with these gospels. I have experienced lots of miracles in my life! Have you experienced miracles in your life?

To experience a miracle in your life you need to have faith that God can do a miracle in your life. God can do anything. You need to have faith that God is good, that God loves us, and that God wants to take care of us. Notice Jesus anticipated the need of the crowd. He said, “Let’s give them something to eat” to test Philip. “There’re over 5,000. What can we do?” “Give them something to eat.” “What?!”

Jesus always anticipates our needs. He knows our needs. Right? And He loves us. He loves us more than we love ourselves. Now for some of you that’s a lot. Right? He loves us more than we love ourselves! And He will take care of us, but what’s necessary is this faith that He can do a miracle, it’s faith that He will, but then generosity. Remember what Andrew said, “There’s a kid here who has five loaves and a couple of fish, but what good is that with so many?” What good is that with so many?

With Jesus and our faith the five loaves and two fishes can serve over 7,000 people because it was 5,000 counting the men not the women and children. So, here are all these people, and when someone takes and is generous with what they've got and compiles that with faith, miracles happen. Faith + Generosity = Miracles. If one of those is missing (i.e. faith or generosity) then we don't experience the miracles, which we need to experience.

And so we come back to this generosity. And again I would often say that people don't experience miracles in their life because they are not generous with what they have. People say this all the time when they come to confession, and I always ask the last question, "Do you consistently take care of the poor?" A lot of the time people will say, "I do what I can." "Well, what can you do?" Everything. That's what you can do. But what do we normally do? We take care of ourselves first, families, and if, If, IF there is anything left over, then we'll take care of others. Correct? Nobody here, but there are people like that. Right? And so we put ourselves first and say "I wonder why I don't experience miracles in my life?" It's very simple. Because you can't even trust God to take care of you so how do you experience Him doing other miracles in your life?

When you and I get to the end of our rope, there's nothing left. I got nothing left. Faith isn't faith until there's nothing left to hold on to. Correct? That's what faith is. So, I give it all. Lord, it's all yours. Everything is yours. Now He can do some miracles in our lives. So we sit there and give to God everything. Lord, EVERYTHING; every dime in the bank-it's yours, everything in my house-it's yours, my family-they're yours. EVERYTHING is at your disposal. I believe that you will take care of my family, and me and I will dispose everything to your will. Isn't it amazing that with so little the boy had, He multiplied and fed 5,000 and had leftovers?

What happens is when you and I surrender everything with faith, then there will be enough not only for you, there will be leftovers for you and for everybody else too. You see why there are so many people in our world who don't believe in miracles? Because they don't have the faith or they don't have the generosity. You need both and miracles will happen. And if I was to ask people to come up here now and start witnessing to the miracles that have happened in your life, I bet you we would be here for a while. There are great miracles He has blessed us with, and if we want more, the two things we need are faith and generosity. Faith + Generosity = Miracles.

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