

Fr. Larry Richards
July 2, 2006
Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Good Morning! This last weekend, I was down at Franciscan University for the Youth Conference – we had 2,300 high school kids there – it exhausted me beyond measure to deal with all of these kids, because I heard confessions and confessions, and confessions. You know, and of course, they come in and cry, and you know how much I love tears, you know, but anyway...one of the greatest things is I had Adoration on Saturday night, and here, in the Field House down there, packed to capacity, you could not move, you couldn't put another chair in there if you wanted to – 2,300 high school kids. And then, we take Jesus and we put Him in the Monstrance and we put Him on the altar. And anyway, before we did that, I used the reading of today's gospel, and I looked at the kids and I said "the same Jesus Christ that healed that woman who was sick for 12 years and no doctor could cure her – the same Jesus Christ who took that 12 year old girl who was dead and gave her life – that same Jesus Christ is here present before us in the Most Holy Sacrament. And when I went and I said "now just as this Jesus who walked through this crowd, and this woman said "if I but touch Him, I will be healed..." the same Christ is going to come amongst us tonight, and you can reach out and touch Him, or touch the Monstrance, or reach out your hand and make an act of faith as St. Thomas did and say "my Lord and my God..." and God can do great things. And for 45 minutes I am walking and thinking "I'm going to die...I'm carrying this big Monstrance..." 45 minutes, up and down and these kids – high school kids – on their faces, crying, reaching out, just to have the experience and to touch Jesus Christ. It was unbelievable! To sit there and see the faith of these young people – for the first time in their lives – some of them – to realize that God is truly present. Now, when I go around and I do my Missions and that – lots of parishes I go to – NOT here of course – but everywhere else – there are some people who do not have faith. Can you imagine? Did you know that you can go to Mass every Sunday and have zero faith? Yep, you can! You can have faith in fire insurance, right? Why do you go to Mass? So, just in case there is a God and if we miss Mass, we go to hell, I don't want to do that, so I'll go to Mass. But there is no faith when someone comes to Mass! There is no this is the reality that I am in the presence of the God of the Universe! Now, think of all the people that were with Jesus Christ! When Jesus was there, not everybody got healed! And when Jesus did heal this woman, he didn't do anything – he was just there – what healed the woman? Her faith! Later on, when the guy's daughter died, and so, when Jesus says "fear is useless, what is needed is?" Faith! Faith makes all the difference! And we have to come to know – do we believe that the same God that was there 2,000 years ago – the same God that reached out and brought that girl to life – the same God who reached out and touched that woman who hadn't been healed in 12 years and brought her healing – that is the same God that is in that tabernacle – the same God who will be on this altar – the same exact God that gives you and me His own Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity at this Mass – Do we believe it? Do we believe that this God is the God of miracles? That God can raise the dead? That God can heal somebody? If not, we are just wasting our time, huh? The last night when I do a Parish Mission, I always tell people "there are going to be miracles that happen Wednesday night in the parish, and if you don't believe that, you are wasting your time." Because if God can't do miracles,

right, I am leaving the priesthood today! I'm going to get ten nineteen-year old girls, and I am going to the Bahamas, and we are going to have a fine time! Ten! Whew! Ya, I couldn't find ten, shut up, I know! I'm not leaving the priesthood anyway, and I'm not going to the Bahamas! Why? Because God can do miracles! I believe it with all of my heart – I have seen it, I have experienced it, I know it! Do you believe that God can do miracles? Do you believe that He has the power today – that you can come in this church and walk out “oh, yea, I went to church, it was hot, oh, I was so hot in church...” Is that all that this is about? Coming to church and being hot, and “oh my gosh he yelled and ...oh would you just shut up!!” Or do you and I come and allow the God of the universe – that we have such faith that those things in our life that kill us – those things in our life that keep us in slavery – those things in our life that cause us illness – that He has the power and the desire to cure it? Can we have that faith that they had then? Because the same Jesus Christ – the same Lord God of the Universe is here today. And you know, I don't know if everybody got the gospel today, but, here is Jesus – He walks in and there is this commotion, and what is the commotion about? “Well, she's dead.” “Oh, shut up” He says - He didn't use the word “shut-up” but He says “she isn't dead, she is only sleeping.” And what did they do to Jesus? The ridiculed Him! Can you imagine? They ridiculed Jesus and what did Jesus do to them? He through them out! Isn't that a nice gentle, loving Jesus? “Get out” he says! Why? Because their lack of faith could stop the healing and the life-giving power! That we have to realize that if we don't have faith, we are stopping the miracles from happening in our community. And so, you and I have to sit there and think am I a person of faith? And if in your heart of hearts, you don't believe that God can raise the dead – you don't believe that God can heal persons physically of illness – if you don't believe that, you have two choices. One, get out! Isn't that nice? Or two – you can ask the God of the Universe to give you that faith! You say “Lord, I want that faith that that man had – I want that faith that that woman had that brought her healing – that man had that brought his daughter back to life! God, I don't have that faith, but that is what I want!” And if you and I come before God this day, begging for the gift of that faith - that is the kind of faith that we will have! And then miracles – more will happen in our community – miracles – more will happen in our life, because the whole key to the spiritual life is faith – that faith that can transform and live miraculously in our life! But, do you believe that He can do that? Do you believe that the same God of the Universe is on this altar? You know, it goes beyond “oh, I get to touch His cloak...” We don't get to touch His cloak – we get to bring God inside of us, and we become one with Jesus. We have more power than anybody on the earth did at that time, because they could just touch Jesus and be in His presence. Today, we get to be one with Jesus and have Jesus live inside of us. The key to having a regular life, going through a monotonous life, being stuck in slavery, being stuck in whatever it is, is whether we have faith, or whether we don't. And if we don't have faith, we either have to get out, or we have to ask for it. And once we have it, we have to make stances in faith, which means, faith isn't faith until there is nothing left to hold onto, right? It is letting go of the building when there is a fire going on, and you have no idea what is underneath, and your dad says “let go, I am going to catch you” and you go “ok...” and you let go. Faith is complete trust in God, and no trust in self. It isn't us who are going to bring miracles, it isn't us who are going to change the world, it isn't us who are going to set people free from their slavery, it isn't us who are going to raise the dead, it isn't us who are going to heal people – it is

Christ and we have to come before Him and say “Jesus, I have been following you MY way my whole life. Jesus, I let go. Jesus, grant me the gift of faith. Jesus, I believe you can do anything. Jesus, I know and I believe that you are just as present here today in the Blessed Sacrament, than you were with that person, and Jesus, I trust in you – I believe in you – I give all my being to you.” That is the key! If we do it, miracles happen. If we don’t, same old, same old.- the choice is yours on whether you have faith, or whether you don’t. Got it? Get it? Are ya gonna do it? Good! May each of your know His love today and forever. Amen.