

# 13th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Cycle B

July 1, 2012 10:30am and 12 noon

Saint Margaret Parish, Bel Air

## My Fear

In my last parish, Saint Francis de Sales, we had a one-story parish center building.

Soon after I went there, the Facilities Manager told me that there was a problem with the roof. He wanted me to go up and see the roof, because we would have to make a decision either to patch or replace it.

I was not looking forward to this, but one afternoon, a professional roofer, the Facilities Manager and I climbed up the ladder to the roof. I immediately walked to the center and just planted my feet there.

I saw the problem, listened to the options, as soon as I could, headed for the ladder. I carefully got my feet on the top rung and went back down.

For whatever reason, I have a fear of open heights where there is no railing or barrier. I am fine in an airplane, but not on a roof.

## Other Fears

My bet is that most of us have a fear of something or other.

Children may fear the dark and youth may be afraid of being disliked by their peers. We adults may be afraid of getting old or being alone.

We in our society may be afraid of terrorism or of our financial security. One writer says that fear has penetrated our inner selves so much that it may affect us profoundly and negatively.

It may make us anxious, angry, and hostile. It may even interfere with our sleep.

Fear may lead us to do things that we should not do. And it may keep us from doing things that we should do.

## *“Just Have Faith”*

In contrast to this, today Jesus says: *“Do not be afraid; just have faith.”*

A synagogue official named Jairus asks Jesus to come and heal his daughter.

Some other people then report that the little girl has already died, but Jesus says: *“Do not be afraid; just have faith.”*

This is a consistent and constant theme in the gospels. From beginning to end, Jesus calls us to trust or have faith in him and not be afraid.

### **Having Faith and Trusting**

I believe that underneath these words, Jesus is calling us to remember our relationship with him.

The gospel tells us that when Jesus was baptized, *“A voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’”* In truth, God speaks these same words to each one of us: *“You are my beloved daughter or son; with you I am well pleased.”*

This relationship that we have God and the faith and trust involved in this can affect us profoundly and positively. With this, we can live in control of our fear, our fear will not control us, and this is the crucial point.

For example, if someone puts us down, the fear of being perceived as weak could drive us to strike back with an equally nasty put-down.

But if we live out of our faith and trust in God, we are less inclined to respond out of fear and more inclined to respond from a center of inner worth and strength. Fear will not control us and lead us to do what we should not do.

Or, if we experience one adult treating another rudely by interrupting them and belittling their viewpoints, the fear of also being ridiculed may lead us to keep quiet and do nothing.

But if we live out of our faith and trust in God, we may speak up and respectfully steer the conversation in a respectful way. Here fear will not control us and keep us from doing what we should do.

### ***“Have Faith”***

So, with simple words to the loving father of a little girl, Jesus gives us an exhortation that is both comforting and challenging: *“Do not be afraid; just have faith.”*