

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

Miracles. We heard about miracles in the time of Jesus but they seem to have passed away or are not reported anymore. But they do happen and continue to happen. As a priest, one of the privileges I have is to hear people's miraculous stories. You would think that because the news does not report them, they do not happen. But they do and I have heard plenty of stories and even seen them. I think that if we took a show of hands there would actually be many people here who have had miracles happen in their lives.

What is a miracle? It comes from the Latin word "marvelous" and it means that something happened through Divine intervention that cannot be explained by science. Some miracles return things back to their healthy nature, other miracles continue to defy nature such as the miraculous stair case in Loretto Chapel in Santa Fe Texas of St Joseph. Or one of Padre Pio's miracles where a man had a mining accident and his eye was turned into a bloody pulp but after Padre Pio prayed for the man his eye remained in that condition but he had perfect eyesight from it. Another miracle is the one of the BC man who was left totally cured from the dirt from the grave of Rose Prince. They happen and the Church is very careful in using real science in the ones that are especially useful for the canonization of saints. Some miracles are small miracles, others are big. Some happen through nature, as with answered prayers. One time we ran out of diesel on the hill to Bella Coola and I prayed that Mary would fill our tank. A fellow showed up with a tidy tank and filled us up. Then when we went to pay the construction boss he refused to take our money. Small miracle, no one will get canonized, but it sure was a big help to us.

What about you? Do you have stories of miracles that have happened in your life? I bet there are people here among us who have seen God do some amazing things. I had one fellow, actually it has happened a few times, where we pray for them and it seems as though they are done for, and when I go back the hospital I can't find them. So I asked when they died and I'm told, "No, sorry, Father, he went home." "What?!" I replied, "I was sure I was going to be doing the funeral," and the doctors said the same thing. It doesn't always work that way for sure though. I have seen many young people die who I really hoped for a miracle for. But God is God and there is no formulas for miracles, only that God does what He knows best and will help us with whatever happens if we ask Him.

But though many of us have experienced miracles, and if not have at least desired that they happen, will they save our faith? No, they will not. Look at the sorry character of Judas who watched our Lord walk on water, raise the dead, he still could not believe. It is not miracles that save our faith but thanksgiving more than anything, it seems to me, that keeps us faithful to God because we will quickly forget the miracle that we see or hear about but thanksgiving will keep us in the hands of God.

There is nothing that robs our joy like being ungrateful. And nothing seems to rob our faith like when we lack thanksgiving. Thanksgiving puts the heart in gear, especially when we are depressed. A simply litany of thanksgiving will lift the clouds. Thanksgiving is not an easy thing or simple, in truth it is a battle that we have to fight otherwise we will make the few problems of our life huge and the good things small. If you and I could understand how we are blessed by the grace of attending one Mass, where we witness God giving himself to us, our lives would fill with joy to know how we are loved. We would have courage to battle each and every evil in our lives with this knowledge. The word Eucharist means thanksgiving, that when God saw that we would not be able to be saved He sent His son to be the remedy for us. So many times I want to hand out Communion and say, "The remedy for your souls. The satisfaction of your lives." Yet we come up like a funeral procession, not that it is not importance to be reverent, but God

just gave us His very life to be inside of us. Instead I say, "The Body of Christ," meaning everything has come to you. Thanksgiving for God has reached down and touched us, given Himself for us. It is a wise and holy thing to have a list of things we are thankful for. It is good to wake up and find things to be thankful for, otherwise our blessings, that are many, will daily pass us by and all we will have is the bad news of the world.