**MIRACLES NEED FAITH**

Chapter 12 in Matthew’s Gospel points out that the new family of Jesus is the one formed of those who hear him. His audience doesn’t understand this teaching, so they doubt his “wisdom” and are “scandalized” by his way of acting. Consequently, Jesus cannot “work miracles” among them because they have no faith in him.

We may note in passing that the words “scandal” or “obstacle,” “power” or “miracles”, and “wisdom”, are terms that St Paul used in his preaching of the crucified Christ. He said, “While the Jews demand *miracles* and the Greeks look for *wisdom*, here we are preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an *obstacle* ..., to the pagans madness, but to those who have been called, ... a Christ who is the *power* and the *wisdom* of God” (1 Cor 1:23).

Not only the Pharisees were scandalized by Jesus but also his own disciples, and Peter no less.

Are we the same when we don’t accept a “prophet” unless he or she does something impressive or extraordinary, if not miraculous? We don’t pay attention to his exemplary life, or to the works of justice and holiness that he does and teaches us to do.

Are we superficial while we think that we know others only too well? This is how they treated Jesus, and this is what we can easily do to Jesus in our neighbour. A husband tires of his wife because she is “good,” but not smart. A wife looks down on her husband because he is a “good man,” but without prestige. Some misunderstood Pope John XXIII and his work because he was too much like a peasant, or like our dear old granddad.

The gospel teaches us that to follow Jesus is to seek not an external glory but an interior clarity. Jesus was rejected because he appeared to be only like the next man. But precisely in the next man he still walks by our side, and he invites us to recognize him. “I am hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison” (Mt 25:35-45). What are we doing for him?

Those with an exclusively scientific mind-set claim that miracles can’t happen because they would contravene nature’s laws. Jesus shows us that it is most likely that they don’t happen because of our lack of faith. But when they do happen, they bolster what little faith we have.