

## Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

### *Miracles and their Purpose*

*“He himself believed and his whole household”* (John, 4:53)

Today’s Gospel describes one of the many miracles wrought by Our Lord in the course of His public ministry. A noteworthy feature of this miracle is the fact that Christ cured the sick boy from a distance. The Scripture tells us that one of the effects of this miracle was the conversion of the boy’s father and of his entire household. They accepted the teachings of Our Lord because the cure of the youth convinced them that these teachings could come only from God.

This incident reminds us that God uses miracles as the most convincing proof of the divine origin of the Catholic faith. A miracle is an extraordinary occurrence surpassing the power of all created nature. When we say it is extraordinary, we mean that it is not in accordance with the usual laws of the universe. It surpasses the power of all created nature; hence it can be produced only by God. For example, it is a miracle when a person is immediately cured of an ailment which medical or surgical means could not cure, or at most could cure only after a lengthy period of time.

Since a miracle can be formed only by God, a miracle wrought in favour of a doctrine attests the truth of that doctrine. For the all-truthful God could not support a false doctrine by so extraordinary a sign of His intervention as a miracle. Thus, the miracles wrought by Our Blessed Lord, such as the instantaneous cure of many sick persons, His walking on the water, His own resurrection from the dead, are a convincing proof that His teaching came from God and hence was infallibly true.

Miracles have taken place in the Catholic Church from the very beginning of its existence. The Church rightly looks on these events as divine signs of the truth of Catholic doctrine. In judging events of an extraordinary character the Church is most careful not to regard them as miraculous unless it is clearly proved that they could not be affected by any natural power. Thus, in passing judgement on the cures wrought at Lourdes, the greatest care is taken to make sure of the supernatural character of each individual cure before the faithful are permitted to regard it as a miracle.

### **Practical Application**

Thank God that the truth of the Catholic Church and of Catholic doctrine has been attested by God through many miracles from the very beginning of Christianity. Familiarise yourself with the teaching of the Church regarding miracles so that you may be able to explain it correctly to non-Catholic inquirers.