

No Faith, No Miracles: What Jesus Asks of You

By Arlene McGannon, DMin

Lent is a time to reflect on the life of Jesus and the events leading to the Crucifixion, and ultimately, the Resurrection. With this in mind, we can learn so much about this period in our Church history through the miracles performed by Jesus. Each chapter of this book provides excellent insight into the times and what lead to and what resulted because of the noted miracles performed. This guide highlights just some of those chapters. We know a little more about some more famous miracles, but the chapters chosen are miracles that explain so much about the life of Jesus and his disciples, and how that message relates to our lives today.

Chapter 5: The Deaf Man

Jesus seeks out those who have faith in Him. This miracle emphasizes the importance of intercessory prayer. In the reflection at the end of this chapter, it asks: What aspect of your life is closed or has some impediment and needs to be opened? What are the similarities between the story of this miracle and the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?

Chapter 6: The Centurion's Slave

This miracle explains the wording of the change in the Roman Missal: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof..." Again, the importance of intercessory prayer. Think of the faith of this centurion when you say these words in the Mass.

Chapter 8: The Ten Lepers

Are you the grateful Samaritan or one who takes God's works for granted? Practice gratitude throughout the day. The Sacrament of Reconciliation gives us the opportunity to be cured of our "leprosy".

Chapter 10: A Woman on the Sabbath

This is one of the few miracles that Jesus self-initiated. Do we live our own lives more by the rules than by our faith? What are some ways that God has performed miracles in your own life? The woman in this miracle was bent over and her burden was relieved by Jesus. In what ways are we bent over by life's burdens?

Chapter 11: The Paralytic and His Friends

This miracle has it all! Reflect on the great faith and perseverance of the man's friends to make sure that he was given a chance for the healing of Jesus. What lies between you and a relationship with our Lord? In our need to see something verifiable, do we miss the spiritual? Do we miss the blessing because the "miracle" is not exactly what you asked?

Chapter 14: The Blind Man at Bethsaida

The Chosen people of God had faith, but when the Messiah was right in front of them, they could not see Him. How is your sight? Do you see and accept Christ or is your vision keeping you from accepting and strengthening your faith?

Chapter 15: Feeding the Five Thousand

This famous miracle foreshadows the Last Supper. Jesus showed the Apostles not to ask God what you can and should do yourself. In other words, do your part to make a miracle happen. As an example, what you have, when shared, can be a miracle for others. The bread of life in the Eucharist is nourishment for the soul and there is plenty for everyone!

Chapter 19: Raising the Widow's Son

This miracle is found only in Luke's Gospel and foreshadowed Calvary. There is so much symbolism to reflect upon. Are you physically alive, but spiritually dead? Jesus invites us to arise and renew your spiritual life. The prayer on page 89 is a beautiful intercession for those who are grieving. It is a reminder that we are not alone during times of such sadness.

Chapter 26: The Raising of Lazarus

This story is found only in the Gospel of John, and this miracle was the last straw in the Jewish leaders' tolerance of Jesus. Martha and Mary were disappointed with Jesus for not coming sooner to save their brother, Lazarus. We do not always understand God's ways. What we want is not always what will reveal most his power and glory. We are very used to getting what we want; to accept that the miracle is not always what is God's will, is the deepest level of faith and trust.