



I suppose because I am despondent because the New York Yankees are contenders for the World Series and the New York Mets are finished for the year, I was thinking about the 1969 Mets I like that memory since I am nineteen years old in that image. As you might recall, the New York Mets were perhaps the worse baseball team for many years, beginning in 1962. The set records for losing the most games. Then, in this amazing year of 1969, they went from ninth place to winning the World Series in five games. New York City was so happy and shocked that they reelected John Lindsey even though he had been very unpopular. This Mets teams has often been referred to as *The Miracle Mets*. We have an even more shocking sport upset story in 1980, when a bunch of American kids beat the great Russian hockey team in the Olympics at Lake Placid. The Russian team had been almost unbeatable for years and had even beaten the professional National Hockey League all-stars in a series of matches. No one gave the young Americans a chance and they pulled what many consider the greatest sports upset in history, beating the Russians in 4-3. Experts have said that if this game was played a thousand times, the Russians would win nine hundred and ninety-nine times. In the last seconds of the game, Al Michaels, the announcer on the network shouted, *do you believe in miracles?* And as the clock struck zero, He screamed, *Yes!*

Do you believe in miracles? I would describe a miracle as something well beyond the ordinary happening without any logical or scientific explanations. I would also say that such miracles are quite rare, and one must be cautious in describing something as a miracle that can only be explained by the power of God. The Catholic Church has been very slow to declare something as a miraculous happening brought about by the grace of Almighty God. I do not think the church would declare the Mets or the USA hockey team overcoming great odds to win a sporting event a miracle, but the language of miraculous is often used somewhat casually. When a person who is always late, come from five minutes early, we joke that it is a miracle. When a student struggling in Calculus gets an A, he or she might say it was a miracle.

Yet, I think there are some what I might call *ordinary miracles* that are often overlooked. When I look at a newborn baby, and I see those tiny little fingernails, I

see a miracle. I know biology can explain it all, but for me, it is a miracle. How did someone figure out how to make coffee from coffee beans? Can anyone deny that chocolate and pizza are not miraculous foods that could only come from the Divine? Young couples often marvel at the seemingly many coincidences that brought them together at just the right times in their lives. A couple married fifty or sixty years will talk about the many little miracles that kept them together and in love for so many years. Occasionally, I have found myself in what I thought was the wrong place at the wrong time, only to find it was the right place at the right time since a person needed a priest at just that time I happened to have wandered in. People could argue such moments are coincidence, but I am not too sure of that.

This past Friday, the world marked what has been declared the as the anniversary of *The Miracle of the Sun* in a little town in Portugal named Fatima on October 13, 1917. You are probably familiar with the story. Three children, a brother name Francisco and his sister Jacinta and their cousin Lucia were rather typical children who loved to play, to sing, and to dance. They were in charge of taking care of their sheep. As they are in the fields, they began over the course of many months to have experiences of seeing and hearing the Blessed Mother speak to them. They are resolved to tell no one but one of them finds it impossible not to tell her family. Lucia's mother is very angry at her daughter and tells her to stop making up stories. Eventually, the parish priest tells the children that this might be the work of the devil. At one point, the local government that is very anti-religious, put the children in jail. But nothing will shake their confidence. Crowds begin to follow the children when they go to the place where they experience the presence of the Blessed Mother on the 13<sup>th</sup> of each month. The little ones ask the Blessed Mother to show them the people a sign so that they will believe and stop saying the children are liars. The blessed mother promises a sign for October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017. More than seventy thousand people gather at this very rural place on that day. The newspaper reporters are there as are the government officials ready to mock the people and condemn the children.

The most anti-religious newspaper, *Il Seculo*, wrote this about that day: *People then began to ask each other what they had seen. The great majority admitted to having seen the trembling and the dancing of the sun; others affirmed that they saw the face of the Blessed Virgin; others, again, swore that the sun whirled on itself like a giant Catherine wheel and that it lowered itself to the earth as if to burn it in its rays. Some said they saw it change colors successively. You can google Fatima: The Miracle of the sun for more information.*

The miracle of Fatima happened at a very difficult moment of history. World War I, the truly first modern where man's ability to kills was becoming more proficient. Atheistic communism was taking over Russia. The message given by our Lady was right from the Gospels and the words of her so Jesus: *Turn away from sin*

***and evil. People are risking eternal damnation. Give your hearts to God and follow his ways.*** There was nothing new in the message of Fatima. We hear it every week at Mass in the Gospels. Yet, like our Gospel today speaks about being invited to a wedding, Mary is giving the world a special invitation to follow her son Jesus, a message that sometimes the world seems to forget.

I think we would agree that our world today is in as much danger today as in 1917. We live with daily threats of terrorism and fear the nuclear weapons in the hands of North Korea. Thanks be to God, much of communism has fallen, as Mary predicted would if we prayed for this as we did for so many years after Masses. Jesus is always inviting, as he does today in the Gospel, to turn to him, to follow him, and to give our hearts to him. Mary, his Mother is always blessing us. Today, we are in the presence of another miracle, that of the Holy Eucharist, bread and wine transformed into his Body and Blood. The answer to Al Michael's question is, *I do believe in miracles.*