

19. January 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN
“The second sign of Jesus at Cana”

Jn 4:43-54

After the two days Jesus departed to Galilee. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast, for they too had gone to the feast.

So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Caper'na-um there was an official whose son was ill. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was living. So he asked them the hour when he began to mend, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live”; and he himself believed, and all his household. This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

“A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country” (Mk 6:4) or, as it says in another Gospel, “no prophet is acceptable in his own country” (Lk 4:24). Jesus shared the fate of the other prophets. In Nazareth, the village where He grew up, they even wanted to throw the Son of God off a cliff, but “passing through the midst of them He went away” (Lk 4:16-30).

Why does this happen?

In general, prophets used to face hostility because they did not do the bidding of kings or other powerful people. If they were true prophets, they proclaimed the word of the Lord without regard to the social position of those to whom they were sent. They are

representatives of God, who "shows no partiality" (Gal 2:6). Think of the prophets Elijah, Jeremiah or John the Baptist, who had no qualms about telling King Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife (Mk 6:18).

On the other hand, the people were familiar with the prophets of their homeland: they had grown up and lived together naturally, they knew their parents and relatives, as we see in the case of Jesus (Mt 13:55) or Jeremiah in the Old Testament. Consequently, they found it particularly scandalous that one of their own had been called by God to be a prophet. Therefore, it easily happened that His mission was rejected in His homeland, to the point that Jesus was in danger of death at the hands of His compatriots in Nazareth.

Elsewhere in Galilee, however, He was well received. They had heard of Him or seen with their own eyes what He had done in Jerusalem. A royal official came to Jesus in distress because his son was dying. He put his trust in Him and asked Him to come down and heal his son.

First of all, the Lord made a comment that is worth reflecting on. Let us remember that before performing the first miracle at Cana, He had told His mother that His hour had not yet come (Jn 2:4). His words on that occasion were: *"Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe"*.

What did the Lord mean?

Was it a subtle criticism that people only believe when they see miracles? Do they only agree to believe when they have tangible proof? This brings to mind a later passage in the same Gospel, when the Apostle Thomas refused to believe the testimony of the other disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead (Jn 20:24-29). Then the Lord said to Him: *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe"* (v. 29b).

We can also believe in the Lord without tangible miracles happening before our eyes. In this sense, faith does not always depend on visible manifestations. However, signs and wonders are wonderful gifts from God that strengthen our faith. For some people, the experience of a miracle was the turning point in their acceptance of faith. As we see throughout the New Testament, Jesus' words were accompanied by many signs and

wonders (Acts 2:22) that confirmed Him as the promised Messiah, the one sent by the Father. The signs invite us to believe or strengthen the faith we already have.

There are two extreme attitudes to be avoided in our journey of following Christ: on the one hand, those who are constantly looking for miracles to confirm their faith; on the other hand, those who try to devalue the signs and wonders of Jesus, considering them an irrelevant or even inconvenient addition to the life of faith.

What faith we find, on the other hand, in the royal official who believed Jesus when He said to him, "*Your son is alive*", and went home! What a joy for this man and for his son that Jesus performed this miracle! And what a wonderful effect it had: "*He himself believed, and all his household.*"

May the Lord grant that today, too, the proclamation of His love may be accompanied by signs and wonders that testify to Him and that people may understand them as an invitation to believe in Him.