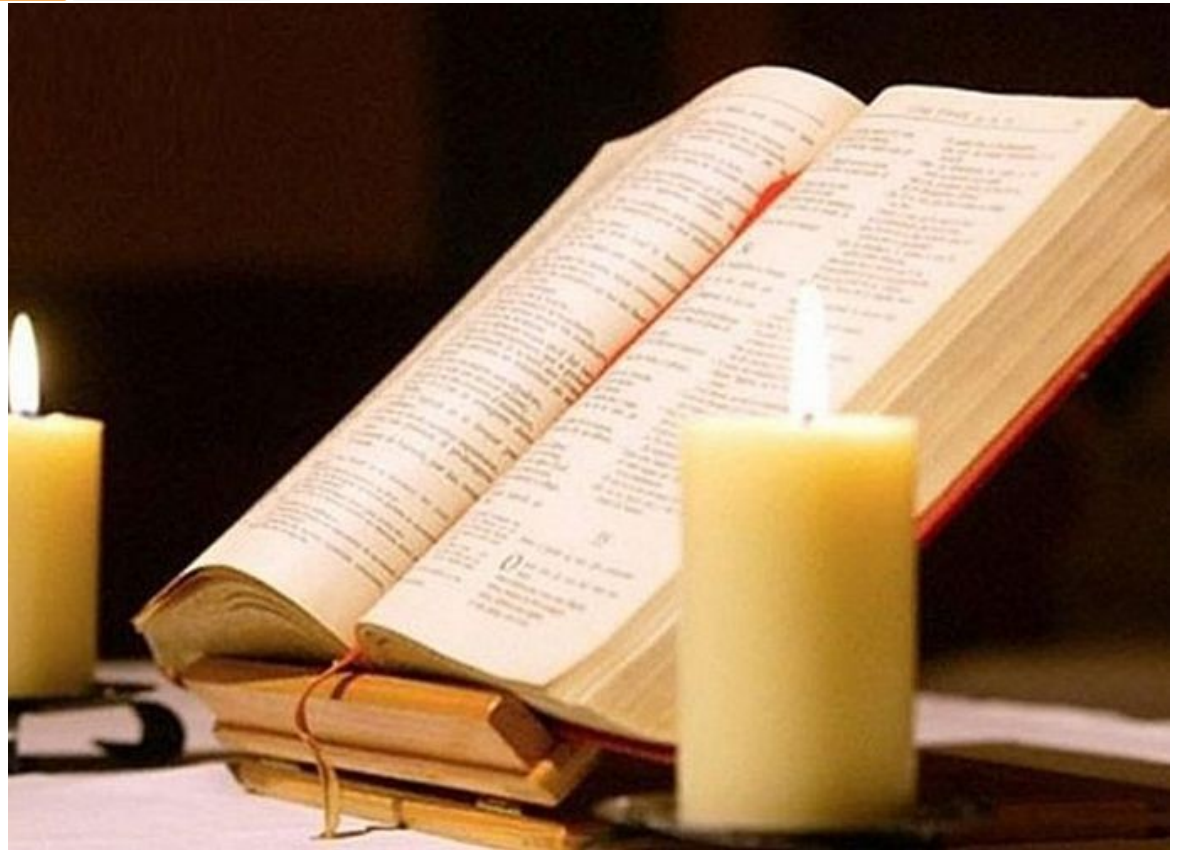


GOSPEL PEARLS

The purpose of miracles

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As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind

man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way. (Mark 10: 46-52)

The miracles Jesus performs are never an end in themselves. The sick who were healed, the blind who regained their sight, and the dead who were brought back to life all had to appear before God and eventually be judged at the end of their lives. At that particular moment, nothing else matters but our faith and the good deeds we've done by virtue of our beliefs. When performing miracles the needy seek, Jesus always underscores the healing of their souls, and hence the importance of their faith in Him, instead of merely healing their bodies. Indeed, it is not a life without trials that can assure us eternal happiness, but rather one in which we receive divine Grace because of our determination to love God and obey His will. How obedient are we to God's will? Do we strive to understand what God wants from us every day?