Daughter, your faith has saved you.

The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him ... Nevertheless, Jesus did not come to abolish all evils here below, but to free men from the gravest slavery, sin, which thwarts them in their vocation as God’s sons and causes all forms of human bondage. CCC 549

God, for some people, is simply the divine watchmaker. He created the world as we know it, wound it up so to speak, and then let it run.

People who believe in that kind of God, often think of miracles as “violations of nature.” “Why,” they wonder, “must God tinker with creation?” Belief in miracles seems to them to be little more than a belief in magic.

The problem with such a view is that it misunderstands the nature of miraculous events. They are not attempts to fix a broken machine, but evidence that God has not abandoned creation. Rather, miracles happen because God is present in creation and he is particularly present to us: the men and women he made in his image.

“What is man,” asks the psalmist incredulously, “that you should keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him?”

That doesn’t sound like God tinkering with creation. It sounds like love.

There are two miracles described in today's Gospel reading. But they are never called miracles. In fact, the word ‘miracle’ is seldom used in the Bible ... and never in the New Testament.

The Gospels say that Jesus accompanies his words with “mighty works, and wonders and signs.” These attest that he was the messiah and that God had indeed come to his people.

Quite often, when Jesus’ actions were miraculous, he told those with him not to tell to others about what they had witnessed -- just as he did at the end of today’s passage.
He did not perform miracles to satisfy people’s curiosity or their desire for magic. Ironically, his miracles sometimes offended people and they accused him of acting by the power of demons.

Once in a while, Jesus did do something miraculous when he was confronted with stubborn unbelief and hostility toward his proclamation that the Kingdom of God was at hand.

But in general, it seems that Jesus did not want people to believe in him because he performed miracles; rather, it he wanted people to believe that he was God, and therefore, that the miraculous was possible.

—•••—

• “If I but touch his clothes,” said the woman with the hemorrages, “I shall be cured.”
• Falling at the feet of Jesus, Jairus implored him:
  “My daughter is at the point of death. Please come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live.”

The woman and Jairus believed in Jesus; therefore, they believed that the miraculous was possible.

That’s why the woman simply wanted to touch his clothes, and why she approached Jesus with “fear and trembling” after she was cured. She knew she was in the presence of God.

And Jesus said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you.”

When others thought all was lost, Jesus said to Jairus: “Do not be afraid, just have faith.”

—•••—

Jesus did not come to abolish all evils in this life, but to free us from sin, which is our gravest danger. For sin separates us from God and from our vocation as his children.

The miracles that Jesus performed for the woman and for Jairus’ daughter were temporary. They were saved from death that day, but not forever, at least not by those miracles.

What saved them in the end was their faith in God.
There are two miracles, which we as Christians absolutely must believe. And if you believe in them, any others will not surprise you. They are miracles that follow from the words of Wisdom in our first reading:

“God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living. God formed man to be imperishable”

What are the two miracles that follow from this? They are the Incarnation and the Resurrection:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.

The woman who touched Jesus garment was ritually unclean. Touching her would have made Jesus unclean – if he were just another Jewish man. But the unexpected happened: touching Jesus purified her. That was the miracle that mattered most.

If your definition of a miracle is, as one dictionary defines it,

“an effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers”

or as some cynics would say “a violation of the laws of nature.”

... then I have to admit I haven't seen a miracle. But I have sensed that God is working through creation to save his people, and that is how I think of miracles:

• I see them in the blessing he gives us every day.
• I see them in Sacramental Grace.
• I see them in those odd coincidences that turn out so well.
• I see them unexpected acts of kindness and love.

I believe that God loves me, as he loves each one of you. Why shouldn’t I expect miracles?