One of the temptations dumped on Jesus by Satan during Jesus' 40 days of prayer and reflection in the desert, was to gain public adulation by working a spectacular miracle. Satan suggested to Jesus that He, Jesus, should leap from the pinnacle of the Temple and float to the ground. If He did this- Satan assured Him- people would be in no doubt that Jesus had super-human powers and would flock to follow Him.

Jesus would have nothing to do with this. Miracles were not to amuse or to titillate. They were not to be used to gain the admiration of the people or to boost up His following.

So why did Jesus work miracles?

Primarily, I believe, out of compassion.

In today's Gospel, it is recorded that Jesus sighed when he first met the unfortunate man who was both deaf and mute. Jesus obviously felt the loneliness and frustration the deafness brought to him.

Jesus took the man aside from the crowd and gently touched him on his ears saying 'Ephphata' – 'Be Opened'. The miracle was worked out of compassion and was a reflection of Jesus' mercy.

To have the heart of Jesus; to embrace the unfortunate with love is our real business as Christians.

And this is very much at the centre of much of the tension in the Vatican these days. We heard last week, how a powerful Archbishop who has been heavily involved in Vatican and world politics, has publicly accused Pope Francis of knowing about the immoral actions of an American Cardinal but of not exposing him and expelling him from the College of Cardinals.

The crimes the Cardinal is alleged to have committed are horrible and were a gross misuse of power. They were horrendously sinful.

The Archbishop contends that the Pope has been protecting the Cardinal and should be sacked for doing so. The Archbishop did not prove his accusations. And his letter is filled with inconsistencies. The Pope simply said: "Read the letter and judge yourself." It is most unlikely that Pope Francis that the charges brought by the Archbishop are in any way true.

Several commentators have noted that the Archbishop has for a long time been highly critical of Pope Francis' papacy. He is part of a group of powerful

people in the Church who perceive Pope Francis as being soft on sin. Some, like the Archbishop, want to be rid of him as Pope.

Pope Francis, while he abominates immorality, clearly has a merciful heart for sinners. And this is where he really gets up the craw of people like the Archbishop. The Archbishop has had engrained into him the need for the Church to stand strong against all immorality and to punish it without mercy.

It would appear as if the same battle was waged in Our Lord's time between the Pharisees and Jesus.

In the interests of upholding the 6th Commandment, the Pharisees were all too happy to stone to death the woman caught in adultery. Jesus, on the other hand, forgave the woman of her sin from her adultery and sent her home with the words: "Go and sin no more."

Who better reflects the heart of Jesus- Pope Francis or this unfortunate Archbishop?

What is happening at the Vatican is hugely important. In days to come, will the leadership of the Church have the mind-set of the Pharisees or will it embrace the Heart of Jesus?

At our Baptisms, the priest touched our ears and said the words Jesus spoke in today's Gospel: "Ephphata" or 'Be Opened'. Are our ears open to the Gospel of Mercy?

I've heard a number of Catholics say that they were ever-so much happier as Catholics when Pope St John Paul was Pope than they are now with Pope Francis.

Do we listen with respect to Pope Francis? Or are we a part of that group in the Church who believe God made a mistake in inspiring the Cardinals to vote for our Pope.

Pope Francis strives to reflect the mercy and the love of Jesus. He upsets lots of people in doing so- just as Jesus upset a lot of people by eating with sinners.

I believe Pope Francis to be God's gift to the Church in these troublesome times. Be proud of him.

'Ephphata- Be Opened'- Let us open our ears and listen to Jesus speaking to us through our Holy Father.