

Fr. John's Homily
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, January 16, 2022

We leave the Advent and Christmas season and enter into Ordinary Time. We will celebrate Ordinary Time until Ash Wednesday; this year it is March 2. So for a short while, the liturgical year is celebrating this Ordinary time when we are invited to grow as disciple of Jesus. If there could be a theme for the next weeks, it would be “change for the better”. When you give yourself to God, change will be for the better.

Luke's Gospel is what we will hear mostly in this year. However, our church begins this part of the season with the Gospel of John. John's Gospel was written later than the other Gospels. John had an order and several themes throughout his message, mainly Jesus is the Son of God. So in John, we have his first miracle reported as Jesus' public ministry begins at a wedding. Remember weddings during the time of Jesus were different than ours today.

Now wedding feasts are for a weekend; in the times of Jesus they could go up to a week. In the many years I have celebrated weddings, not once has the bride, groom and the family ever run out of food or drinks. There is always plenty. If they did, we could run quickly to the store and buy whatever we needed. Not so during the time of Jesus. In the time of Jesus, though, it would have been a major crisis. So the host, whom we presume to be the groom or the father of the bride or of the bridegroom, would have faced a great disgrace. It would have been a disgrace upon the couple and their families; not a great way to start out beginning your married life and beginning your new family.

At a certain point during the wedding feast at Cana, the wine runs out and Jesus' mother, Mary, tells him of the need for more wine. Mary here is acting as an intercessor, in which we often use her today. I turn to Mary often, especially in the Memorare, the Rosary, First Saturday Devotion, and the Prayer of Consecrating to her Immaculate Heart. Mary is one who has great concern for others and takes these concerns to her Son.

In reply to His mother, Jesus declares that his “hour” has not yet come. The “hour” is identified as his passion, suffering and his death on the cross. In the “hour” at Cana, Jesus changed the water into wine; it is very easy for us to see how this happens for us at each Mass. Think about the moment at each Mass when Jesus changes wine into His Blood. We gather on Sunday for the Eucharist, the wedding feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7), the new Cana, where we drink the new wine, the Blood of Christ poured out for His bride, the Church.

Remember the word Epiphany means Manifestation. Even here at the Wedding Feast of Cana, Jesus is showing His love and grace given in great abundance for this couple, for this family, and their guest. In a way we are like this crowd at the wedding feast, given to drink of the new, best wine to celebrate in the wedding feast of God and His people where His Grace is always new and abundant. In every sacrament, we are given graces in abundance far more than we will ever need.

Mary seems to know right away that the wine was running out and quickly got the attendants to listen to Jesus and carry out what he might ask. Appealing to her Son's

compassion and knowing who He was and what He could do, she brings this concern to Jesus. Mary says words to them that is good advice to live by, *“Do whatever He tells you.”* Isn't this what our life as Christians called to be about, doing what Jesus tells us? And once we do, change happens for the better. As we pray in Psalms 23, only goodness and kindness will follow us all the days of our lives. This happens for the ones who listen to the voice of the shepherd or do whatever He tells you.

Doing what Jesus tells us, in this instance was the servants being called to fill the jars with water. The waiter in charge tells the groom that the choice wine is usually served first, rather than later, in a wedding feast. *“What you have done is chosen the best wine last.”* The remark of the waiter in charge did not know where the miraculous wine had come from only a few knew that Jesus had something to do with it. The miracle of water becoming wine points back now to this mysterious giver of the new wine. The mystery of Jesus and His origin will be a constant theme throughout John's Gospel.

In this first sign we are told that people came to believe in him. The crowd was always amazed, impressed by Jesus but they were experiencing firsthand the glory and majesty of the only-begotten Son. What they believed about Jesus is not yet fully understood. John makes it very clear; Jesus is the Eternal Son of God. This is what all of John's signs will point to: Jesus is the Son of God.

Mary's words and prayer to do whatever the Lord asks, can be difficult at times. It takes prayerful discernment, readiness to surrender our own plans and allowing the Lord to be the Lord our lives. Still, Mary will put her faith and trust in God; now like she has done from the very beginning of give her “Yes” to God's plan, completely trusting in His goodness. She surrendered not just a thing but her very own self. *“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word”*, was Mary's response to the Angel Gabriel.

Mary puts her faith and trust in God. She knew that Jesus would do the Father's will when she turned to the servants and said, *“Do whatever He tells you.”* Upon Mary's words, the first miracle of our Savior occurred.

Over the centuries, in every age and on every continent, Mary continues her maternal role, helping us to imitate her Beloved Son. This is what she assists us to do in our time and place in history. Let us rejoice, then, in being invited by Mary to do the Lord's will, thereby becoming faithful and beloved disciples of Jesus. As we listen and obey God and His words - change will happen for the better.