

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time C/2013

The readings of this second Sunday of Ordinary time talk about God's generosity and benevolence. They invite us to realize that where God is present things change completely, from imperfection to perfection, from gloom to joy. They also invite us to imitate God by putting our talents and gifts at the service of our brothers and sisters.

The first reading of the book of Isaiah announces a change in the life of Israel after the return from exile. Israel will become a brilliant land at the sight of nations and kings. It will receive a new name given by God himself. Its destiny will change, because neither will the land be desolate or its inhabitants forsaken anymore. The Lord, God, will espouse the land, making of Israel a glorious crown in his hand and rejoice in its midst.

What is behind this text is the idea that God is capable of changing human history by bringing it from defeat to victory, from sadness to joy. Another idea is the truth that where God is involved everything changes for the best, for the good of his people.

This text allows us to better understand today's Gospel as it describes the miracle performed by Jesus in turning water into wine. First of all, the Gospel says that Mary, Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding in Galilee. Unfortunately, they ran out of wine and Mary went to tell it to Jesus.

In his answer, Jesus claimed that it was not his business because his time had not yet come. But, Mary kept her faith in him and invited the organizers to do everything Jesus would tell them. In the end, Jesus transformed water into wine at the delight of the headwaiter who did not know where it came from and why such a wonderful wine was kept until now. The Gospel finishes by saying that it was the beginning of the signs of Jesus, which revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

What do we learn from this Gospel? The first thing I want to highlight is about the importance of counting on God at all times. What do I mean by that? In fact, when we organize a feast, we examine all the details susceptible of contributing to the success of the event, namely the number of the invited guests, the quantity of food needed, the gathering space, the length of the event, etc.

Once we have examined everything, we feel secure that our celebration will be fantastic. But, human experience has taught us that, in spite of all the precaution taken, things do not always turn right. A forgotten detail can derail the success of an event that was carefully planned. That is what happened at the wedding of Cana.

That is why it is important that we come to understand that we cannot always count on our strength, our skills and our abilities in order to succeed. Our human abilities are not a guarantee that things will work. We have also to count on God and his help in order to succeed in our enterprises. There is nothing wrong with that.

In fact, there is no denial of who we are and what we are capable of producing with our talents and gifts. What is at stake is the truth that if the Lord does not build the house, it is in vain that the builders work. If the Lord does not guard the city, it is in vain that the watchers are mounting guard (Ps 127: 1).

There is something we have to learn and which is characteristic of John's Gospel, namely that his writings have two levels: a surface and a deeper one. At the surface, the

people in Cana lacked wine and the wedding feast ran the risk of becoming a fiasco for the organizers and a humiliation for the couple. At the deeper level, John wants to tell us that when human beings are left alone, a failure is possible in what they do. But, when Jesus is involved in what they do, they stand the chance of succeeding beyond imagination.

That is why the changing of water into wine teaches us that wherever Jesus is involved, failure becomes success, defeat becomes victory, imperfection becomes perfection. Without Jesus, life is sad and with Jesus, life becomes exciting and thrilling. This fact is demonstrated through the quantity of transformed wine. In fact, we have 6 jars of water, each with a capacity of 20 to 30 gallons. If we multiply 30 gallons 6 times, we will have 180 gallons of wine. What wedding feast in the world would be capable of consuming in an evening and in a village such a quantity of wine? Think a little bit about it.

The second thing I want to highlight is about the perpetual role of Mary in salvation history. As I always say, nobody knows us better than our mum. And I believe that today's Gospel proves me right.

In fact, Mary, who was among the guests, realizing that the celebration was about to be a fiasco, went to look for Jesus' intervention. And yet, nobody knew Jesus and what he was capable of doing for people in distress except Mary. That is why in spite of Jesus' strange answer, she kept her faith in him. She knew that even if his time had not yet come, he would do something. That is the reason why she asked the servants to do whatever he would tell them.

That role of Mary of intervening for the people in trouble is not something of the past; it is permanent and perpetual in salvation history. As she has done in the past, she can do today, because her connection to Jesus has not changed at all. She remains the mother of Jesus, with the same heart and the same sensitivity to the misery of the world. That is why the Church recommends us to turn to her for intercession.

We should always remember that Jesus listens to Mary with a particular ear because of the relation linking him to her. It does not mean that Mary takes the place of Jesus; it means only that, knowing Jesus better than any of us, she can intercede for us as she did for the couple of Cana. Her intercession before Jesus stands the chance of being accepted with joy and obedience of a son to a mother.

Let us pray, then that Jesus, who turned water into wine, may change our shortcomings into joy for the glory of his Father. Let us pray that God may help us to use our gifts and talents for the benefit of our fellows, as Mary did with the gift of her motherhood for the good of the couple of Cana. Let us ask Jesus to answer our prayers, and to come to our help when we are in need, through the intercession of his Blessed mother. May God bless you all!

Isaiah 62: 1-5; 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11; John 2: 1-11



Homily Date: January 20, 2013

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Document Name: 20130120homily.pdf