

## Second Sunday in Ordinary Time C/2016

The readings of this Sunday talk about the importance of relationships. They highlight especially the relationship with God and with our fellows as a source of joy. They invite us to maintain that joy in our life by being faithful to God and by helping each other with our gifts.

The first reading of the book of Isaiah announces a change in the life of Israel after the return from exile. It shows that Israel will become a brilliant land at the sight of nations and kings. It shows also that while its destiny will change, it will receive a new name and become a glorious crown in the hands of God.

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 understand what is at stake in today's Gospel as Jesus transforms water into wine. First of all, the Gospel mentions a wedding at Cana in Galilee in which Jesus, his disciples and his mother, Mary, were the invited guests.

Then, it speaks of a sudden shortage of wine that occurred during the celebration of the wedding feast. It also reports about the request of Mary to Jesus in favor of the hosts, the instantaneous reaction of Jesus to that request and the changing of water into wine. The Gospel ends with the reaction of the headwaiter and the observation that it was the first miracle that Jesus performed.

What do we learn from today's Gospel? Today I want to talk about marriage. In fact, today's Gospel states that the transformation of the water into wine at Cana was Jesus' beginning of his signs through which he revealed his glory and brought the disciples to believe in him.

I believe that the fact of performing his first miracle at a wedding, while he was not yet known to many, is a sign that Jesus held marriage in high esteem. Of course, he has acted at the request of Mary, his mother, but I believe also that his concession to her shows that he did not want the joy of the couple and guests to be taken away by the shortage of wine.

That is why I believe that marriage is foremost and above all a place of joy and the fulfillment of the spouses. I believe also that by performing his first miracle in the context of a home and at a wedding, Jesus wants to tell us that a home should be a space of happiness.

However, there is a paradox in the attitude some people have about the place they call home. Outside their home, they are hilarious, gentle and kind. But in their own home, they are more aggressive, more selfish and more discourteous than they would dare be in society with strangers. To be at our best with strangers and at our worst with our family is to deny the essence of what we call home and especially the essence of marriage.

Moreover, the profound motivation that led Jesus to transform water into wine was to save this couple from the humiliation of a celebration of their wedding that was about to turn into chaos for lack of wine. In fact, wine meant a lot in Jewish society. The failure of

provisions would have been a big deal, because hospitality in the Middle East was a sacred duty. But for the provisions to fail at a wedding feast would be a terrible humiliation for the bride and the groom.

In other words, by changing water into wine, Jesus wanted to keep the joy and the happiness of this couple intact. If that is the case, Jesus is challenging us to always look for the happiness of our fellows. That is why it is malicious and even cynical to enjoy the misfortune of others and to make a good story of them an idle gossip. We have always to remember what Jesus has done for this couple as an invitation that we do the same with our fellows.

Though it was Jesus who changed water into wine, we should not, however, forget the person for whom the favor of this miracle took place. In fact, it was at the request of Mary that Jesus acted. When things went wrong, Mary turned to Jesus. She knew that even if the time of Jesus had not yet come, he would do something. In other words, Mary had enough faith in Jesus that he could do something for those people in need. She could trust him completely even when she did not know in detail what he would do. It is that trust that pushed her to ask the servants to do whatever he would recommend them.

That role Mary played, she is playing it today and we have really to turn to her in our needs. Of course, she does not take the place of Jesus, but as her mother, Jesus listens to her even in difficult circumstances. That is the reason why the Church recommends us to pray continually through the intercession of Blessed Mother, Mary.

Moreover, the celebration of the wedding of Cana reminds us that human prevision has always its limit. Even if we have to prepare everything cautiously, we are not spared from possible surprise. That is why we have to remember that in life, there are always dark hours, where we do not know what can happen to us and to our loved ones.

When such moments come, we have to turn to Jesus and his Blessed Mother. As Mary played a role in the life of Jesus while he was not yet known, she keeps it again today. That role is permanent in salvation history because nobody today will become the mother of Jesus. As Mary has intervened for the couple in Cana, she can do the same thing for us. In difficult times, let us call upon her and ask for her help.

Like Jesus who used his special gift to turn water into wine; like Mary who used her gift of motherhood to intervene for the distressed couple, let us use our gifts for the good of our brothers and sisters. Let us ask Jesus to bless us 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**



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