

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time C/2019

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. It shows that Israel will become a brilliant land at the sight of nations and kings of the earth. It also shows that not only the land will change, but even its inhabitants.

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 changing water into wine. First of all, the Gospel says that Mary, Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding in Cana.

Then, it describes an incident that happened as they ran out of wine. It describes also what Mary did in involving Jesus in that situation. After that the Gospel relates what happened as Jesus transformed water into wine at the delight of the guests and the hosts. The Gospel ends 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? Today I want to talk about the importance of counting on God at all times. What do I mean by that? Let me explain. 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 for months.

That is exactly what happened at the wedding of Cana. For that reason, I believe that we have 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 always work for the best. We have also to count on God and his help in order to succeed in our enterprises. We have always to pray before undertaking any task, so small it might be.

There is nothing wrong with that. In fact, there is no denial of 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 more we have to learn, 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 turning into a fiasco for the organizers and the 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; 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 that.

Now, let us turn our sight to the person at the origin of which the miracle that took place. The author of the miracle is Jesus, but the person who pushed him to do it is Mary. By this intervention, we see the discreet role of Mary beside Jesus. That role is perpetual in salvation history. Nobody else will take it. As I often say, nobody knows us better than our mum. And the Gospel of this morning proves me right.

In fact, Jesus who was among the guests stayed quiet. It does not mean that he could not do anything on his own, but in this case, he did it thanks to the intervention of Mary. Keep in mind that up to now, 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 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. 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, the same sensitivity to the misery of the world. For that reason 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 may change the water of our short-comings into wine, for the glory of his Father and our consolation. 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



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