

HOMILY for 2nd SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME – Year C

This Sunday's Gospel talks about running out of wine in the middle of a Wedding Reception. Reflecting on that, I'm reminded of this cute story that I'd like to share with you.

There were two drunks waiting for the bus. One was holding a large bag. The drunk next to him asked, "Hey, what have you got in that bag there?"

The other drunk replied, "Porcupines."

"How many porcupines have you got in that bag then?" the first drunk asked.

"I'm not telling you!" replied the other.

"I'll tell you what," said the first, "if I guess how many porcupines you have in that bag, will you give me one?"

"I'll tell you what," replied the other, "If you guess how many porcupines I have in this bag... I'll give you both of them!"

Anyway, this Sunday's Gospel tells us about the first miracle that Jesus did during His years of ministry. The miracle at the Wedding in Cana lets us know about the divine nature of Jesus and how it was revealed at this joyous event. Most of us often think that Weddings would always run smoothly & have no problem at all. We sometimes forget how many hours of planning it would usually take to put together a social event. In spite of endless hours of planning, the couple & their Master/Mistress of Ceremony would generally miss out on something for their wedding. The couple in this Sunday's Gospel evidently miscalculated the amount of wine needed at their Wedding Reception. They unfortunately ran out of wine in the middle of their party. I guess they must have invited some of the guests who belonged to AA group! But, they could not let the party run out of wine like that. It would be the laugh of the town; & they would never hear the end of it. So, what were they going to do? They would either run to the nearby store like Seven-Eleven to get more wine or come to someone who could use His divine power to help them take care of their problem. But, the first solution would take time & lots of money to get more wine from the store. So, the best solution for them was to appeal to Jesus & ask for divine help.

Let's now take a look at how Jesus was asked for assistance. We were told that, at a certain point, the wine ran out, & Jesus' mother told Him, "They have no more wine." Jesus replied, "Woman, how does this concern of yours involve me? My hour has not yet come." His mother instructed those waiting on table, "Do whatever He tells you." The couple might have mistakenly ordered not enough wine for their wedding reception. But, they were smart enough to invite both Jesus & His mother to their event. These special guests were their insurance policy as they were able to bail them out from an embarrassing situation with other guests. Jesus evidently did His first miracle at their wedding by turning water into wine. So, the first spiritual lesson that this miracle teaches us is to invite Jesus & Mary to all important events of our lives & be near them at all times. When we do that, they will come to our aid in times of need.

Another important lesson that this miracle reminds us is the role of Mary in the life of the Church. Many Christians tell us to go directly to Jesus & ask for help. But, we Catholics often go to Mary & the Saints because of story like the one in this Sunday's Gospel. That wedding couple could have gone directly to Jesus & brought their problem to Him. But, they were afraid that He might turn them down. So, they came to Mary & asked her to intercede for them. Jesus

might not be ready to do a miracle yet, but He had to do it because His mother requested it. That is why we Catholics have often called on Mary & the Saints to intercede for us in our prayers. For we know that Jesus could not turn them down.

However, those were not the only spiritual lessons that this Sunday's Gospel would want to teach us. Here is another one that it could teach us: "...As prescribed for Jewish ceremonial washings, there were at hand six stone water jars, each one holding fifteen to twenty-five gallons. 'Fill those jars with water,' Jesus ordered, at which they filled them to the brim. 'Now,' He said, 'draw some out & take it to the waiter in charge.' They did as He instructed them. The waiter in charge tested the water made wine, without knowing where it had come from; only the waiters knew, since they had drawn the water." We can see from that Gospel passage how Jesus needed the waiters to prepare the stone water jars for Him to perform His miracle. Without those helping hands, I don't know if Jesus could carry out His first miracle all by Himself or not. Unfortunately, we have often had a misconception that we just need to sit on our hands & pray for a miracle which somehow God will make it happen for us. We do not realize that the Lord needs our helping hands to make His miracles happen as we see those waiters did for Jesus in today's Gospel.

One of the reasons for some people not to lend a helping hand for Jesus to do more miracles in our world is because they think that Jesus does not need any help, or they do not have anything to offer. To that point, St. Paul has this reminder in this Sunday's Second Reading, "There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different ministries but the same Lord; there are different works but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one the Spirit gives wisdom in discourse, to another the power to express knowledge... Prophecy is given to one; to another power to distinguish one spirit from another. One receives the gift of tongues, another that of interpreting the tongues." As you can see, the Spirit has bestowed on each & every one of us with different gifts. It is up to us to make good use of them for the common good & help usher in all sorts of miracles every day. If we do not use our gifts to those ends, we will not have a caring community around us & experience miracles in our daily lives. So, I urge all of us to open our generous hearts & make good use of God's gifts for us to bring about more miracles in our world.

My dear brothers & sisters, we all want miracles like the one at the Wedding in Cana happen to us every day. But, in order for it to happen, we need to invite not only Jesus into our lives but also Mary & the Saints. That way Mary & the Saints could intercede for our prayers & needs. However, Jesus would need many helping hands to turn the miraculous possibilities into a reality for us like the waiters did at the Wedding in Cana. Would you join me to lend Jesus a helping hand & make more miracles happen in our world every day?