

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C) Homily
Saint William, Champion | January 16, 2022
Is 62:1-5 | 1 Cor 12:4-11 | Jn 2:1-11

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Who doesn't like going to a wedding reception? These days, we have all kinds of receptions. In fact, I came across a TV show called Four Weddings, in which the bride with the "best" wedding wins a dream vacation. But even for a "normal" reception, there is a lot of preparation and things don't always work out perfectly. And that's when things get interesting. Sometimes there's an issue with the food. Or maybe it's a guest that doesn't quite behave.

I find it refreshing that John shares a story about Jesus and Mary and the disciples all going to a wedding feast. John doesn't give us any details about whose wedding it is, but scholars have suggested that it might be a relative of Mary.

Weddings were very different back then, and a wedding feast was not like our three or four hour long receptions, but stretched out to a week in length. There is some thought that the reason why the wine ran out

was because the families were not able to afford enough. But in any case, running out of wine would be a major embarrassment for everyone.

Who is the first to notice? It's Mary, and today's Gospel is one of the few in which she speaks: "They have no wine." Jesus responds with a somewhat short response: "How does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." Mary is persistent. She refuses to give up, and tells the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." And from that moment on, things are different.

Jesus has the servers bring him six stone jars, each full of about 20 to 30 gallons of water. But when Jesus has them take the jars to the steward, by his miracle, the water is changed into wine – and this is a lot of wine, plenty for any reception. The feast continues and only the servers, Mary, Jesus and the disciples know the real story.

There are three elements to the story that I like:

First, it points out Mary's role as an intercessor. Jesus was perfectly OK with leaving things alone. It was Mary who understood what was happening and encouraged Him to do something. She demonstrates faith

in her son by telling him about what is needed and leaves it to him, knowing that he will take care of whatever is needed. Is there a something that you need in your life? Perhaps you should bring it to Mary's attention.

Second, Jesus accomplishes His first miracle not in a vacuum, but through others around him, who helped Him in His mission. They didn't do anything elaborate – He just asked them to fill the jars with water, and they brought them back totally full.

One of the things I often hear people say about putting their faith into practice is, "Oh, I could never do that." And I think that for many of us, we sometimes let that be a crutch. We sell ourselves short, when in reality, we are capable of doing more than we know. I'd like you to think of some of the people God has selected to assist him in his plans. How about a young boy named David to battle against Goliath? Or how about his disciples, who were just ordinary people?

God can accomplish great things in our lives. And many times, what he asks of us isn't difficult. We just need to have faith, knowing that he

will give us whatever we need to accomplish what he asks of us. Or as I have heard it said, “God does not call those who are qualified; he qualifies those who he calls.”

Finally, there is the matter of the water jars that Jesus used. The author of the Gospel purposely points out that these jars were used for Jewish ceremonial washings – like the washing of hands and feet that was done for guests. Jesus changes the water that was used for the outside of our bodies into wine – something that we would use inside our bodies. He takes vessels that were meant for one thing under the Jewish law and gives them a new meaning under his law of love.

We live in a world that is focused on outward appearances. But our Gospel today reminds us to take care of what is inside of us as well as what is on the outside. It’s not only about our actions towards our neighbors that matter – it’s about our underlying attitudes toward them.

Today, we witness the first of Jesus signs, by which He revealed His glory. This week, will we allow Him to reveal His glory through us? How

will we respond when we see others in need? Let us remember the last words of Mary in our Gospel: “Do whatever he tells you.”