“Stay with us, Lord”
2021-2022 Year of the Holy Eucharist, Diocese of Jackson

SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (Year C)
January 16, 2022

I. Weddings are supposed to be one of the most joyous times in a person’s life.
   A. At a wedding everyone wants everything to be absolutely perfect – However, the reality is they are never perfect.
      i. Someone is going to be late, fall down, or pass out.
      ii. The cake is going to fall, the caterer is going to be late, or the music was just not done well.
      iii. The photographer is always in the way and makes all the guests wait for hours while endless numbers of pictures are taken.
   B. There is always some discord, some chaos, some disappointment associated with wedding feasts.
   C. In the Wedding at Cana story, we find just such a disaster in the making, with Jesus’ mother playing a central role.
      i. Archbishop Fulton Sheen, speculating on the mother of Jesus’ role, suggests that one of the people getting married must have been a close relative of the mother of Jesus.
      ii. And consequently, this explains why Jesus was there.
      iii. Also, the traditional location of Cana, only about 7 miles from Nazareth, gives rise to the notion that Jesus and Jesus’ mother knew the bride or groom well.

II. Jesus arrives with some of his disciples, probably the ones mentioned in the preceding chapter: Peter, Andrew, Phillip, and Nathaniel, and Jesus’ mother approaches him with a serious problem, “They have no wine.”
   A. It is a bit puzzling to me that the opening phrase of today’s Gospel is omitted from our reading. The opening phrase states, “On the third day there was a wedding at Cana ….”
   B. That reference to the “third day” in the Scriptures should alert us to the fact that God is about to do something really big – a great Theophany—in which God shows forth his Glory. And that is precisely what is going on here.
   C. The most faithful of all of Jesus’ disciples, his mother, approaches him with a need, not for herself, but for someone else.
   D. Don’t be misled by those who see Jesus’ response to his mother as an insult. The title “woman” is not only one of respect but echoes back to the “woman” of Genesis Chapter 3, the mother of all humanity. We see Jesus use this title of respect once again when addressing his mother at the foot of the cross, where she becomes the mother of all of Jesus’ disciples.
   E. And then the mother of Jesus offers to the servants the best advice that any of us could ever receive, “Do whatever he tells you.”
      i. While Jesus could have made the wine miraculously appear in the empty stone water jars, he chose to include others and so foster an opportunity for the servants to come to faith.
      ii. I think sometimes people think that God is going to miraculously heal them of their sins, their addictions, their vices, without the hard work of discipling ourselves.
iii. Recall the adage, “Grace perfects nature.” If we are really choosing to make Jesus Lord of every part of our life, then we are in for a great struggle that will require some serious dying and rising on our part.

iv. Being a disciple of Jesus means becoming more like him, just as the Gospel Acclamation tells us, “God has called us through the Gospel to possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

F. As disciples, when we find ourselves in difficult circumstances, or when members or our family or friends are in need of help, like the mother of Jesus we are to take our concerns and cares right to Jesus.

G. However, this does not let us off the hook. We must commit ourselves to doing whatever we can to participate in the work that Jesus performs through us.

H. We must make ourselves ready vessels to “Do whatever he tells us.”

III. The miracle of the water becoming wine reminds us that our simplest efforts can be transformed by God’s grace into a miraculous event in someone else’s life.

A. And God doesn’t do things by halves. Jesus tells the servants to fill the jars with water, to the brim.

B. God gives us his graces in superabundance. He does not ration his gifts but pours his grace out like the Sower who throws seed on the path, in the weeds, on the rocks, and yes, even on good ground.

C. There is an adage in Ignatian Spirituality that states in the spiritual life you don’t get anything you don’t already have, but you become aware of the graces already available to you.

D.

IV. A wedding is a very suitable scene for Jesus to reveal his glory. The most common image in the Old Testament for God’s relationship to Israel is one of Bridegroom and Bride. Our first reading from Isaiah illustrates the prevalence of this imagery.

A. “You shall be called ‘My Delight, and your land ‘Espoused.’” “your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you.”

B. Just as a married couple give their bodies and their lives to each other on their wedding day, so our Lord, our Bridegroom, has given us his body and his life, the Holy Eucharist, on this altar of sacrifice.

C. Jesus longs for you to be his bride. He longs to give his body, blood, soul, and divinity to you. He longs for you to share in the “good wine” which has been saved for us. He longs for us to give him our all, in return.

D. My brothers and sisters, we have been invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We are called to an intimate relationship with the Risen Christ. Are we willing to give Jesus our all, in return? Are we ready to “Do whatever he tells you?”

Prepared by Deacon John McGregor