

Homily. 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.C. 15/16 January 2022.

There are 3 messages for us in the readings. Firstly, if we didn't know it already, never underestimate the power of mothers. Secondly, that God always has plenty of good wine and happily offers it to us if we will only ask; and lastly that we have to listen to and read the signs of our time.

In his gospel St. John makes it clear that Jesus wasn't keen to get going with His public ministry. It was early days after all, having just called His first few disciples, so it seems that He was unsure about when to act, waiting for a 'sign' that He should get started. Cana in Galilee was a rural back-water after all, this was a wedding, a community social occasion, and providing wine seemed not a very grand way to show what He was on about for God.

Either way, Mary wasn't buying into her son's hesitancy. Jesus might be waiting to choose the right 'hour' to reveal Himself, but Mary had decided that this was as good a time as any for Him to get cracking. She was concerned that the bride and groom and their families not be shamed and embarrassed by running short on provisions, so she simply said; "Do whatever He tells you." Let's remember this when we're in need, when we're feeling ashamed or are about to be embarrassed. Mary is a powerful intercessor on our behalf and we'd be foolish to ignore her help when dealing with life's problems and when seeking help from her son.

It was wine at a wedding feast that was needed to save the day and to prevent the couple and their families from looking poor, mean and foolish in front of everyone. Being firmly nudged into action by His mother, Jesus

provided not just any wine but the very best and in vast quantities, something like 180 gallons which is around 800 litres. The message here is that when Jesus acts to help us He acts very well in terms of both quality and quantity.

This miracle at a wedding feast reveals more than just helping out in a crisis. It reveals something deeper, something important for us about Jesus and about His mission from God. St. John calls this the first 'sign' given by Jesus. Signs have to be perceived and then interpreted, which is what the gospel is asking us to do. As the 1st reading points out weddings remind us of God's marriage to us and to God's people, Vines and wine are connected to the renewal of Israel and to the final heavenly feast, an endless never-running-out party of joy and plenty with God and all who have faith. In the 2nd reading St. Paul links this to the outpouring and overflowing abundance of God's Spirit in us, gifting us in so many diverse but complementary ways as we form Christ's Body, our Church.

God's signs haven't stopped though. They're all around us, the signs of the Divine in our time, and as it is with the gift of tongues they need interpreting. That's part of our task and service; to read, understand and share the meaning of the Divine signs today. To do this we have to keep our eyes and ears open looking at and listening to what's actually happening around us. We need to pray over what we've noticed until God's message reveals itself to us. Only after doing this are we called to share with others what we've perceived and what's been revealed. The questions we must ask ourselves are these; What do I see and hear around me? What are the thoughts, images, words and feelings arising within me? What is God saying to me at this time about myself, my

family, our society, our Church and this world that I inhabit? After sensing the meaning of these signs comes the how; How will I act on what's been revealed, speaking and living courageously and humbly for the good of others, in the knowledge that with God there is always more, an abundance of saving truth that never runs out or leaves us ashamed. If nothing else then, at least a better understanding the signs of our times will help us to make some sense of living at this crazy point in world history and of the new age that's clearly emerging right before our eyes.