

Where Have You Been?

2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Isaiah 6:1-5, 1Corinthians 12:4-11, John 2:1-11

Our readings over the past several weeks have found us celebrating Mary's preparations for her baby, the actual birth of Jesus, the coming of the shepherds and Magi to the baby Jesus and last week His baptism. Then this week's readings...well – BAM – Jesus is all grown up and we find him with family, friends and his mother at a wedding. Quite a sudden transformation. With the exception of the Feast of the Holy Family when Jesus is found by his parents as a youngster in the temple, we don't have anything historically from infancy to adulthood on Jesus. Don't you just want ask "where have you been?"

Many times I wonder if Jesus is asking us – where have you been? With God there is no coincidence, no happenstance, no fluke or chance; everything has a purpose. There is a reason we don't know the details of Jesus' childhood, and for that we need not wonder – that is the purpose. And it is not by coincidence that we find Jesus today performing his first miracle not in a synagogue or what we would consider a holy place, but at a party, a wedding feast, a reception as we would call it. Jesus is telling us that he is not only performing miracles in places like this church, but in everyday places where we are. Do we see and witness to them out there as we do here on Sunday?

We have just passed one of those feasts, Christmas, where church attendance is way up. But for some reason, those numbers are not the same as say, the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time, today's celebration. What about many of our fellow members who are no longer with us, instead joining another church, many a nondenominational one? For many not here and those that have left, there are various reasons. A number of years ago a pastor of a nondenominational church whose members are about 40-50% former Catholics did a survey asking them why they changed. The answers were:

They're always asking for money
I don't like the music
I can't relate to the message
It doesn't meet my needs
The services are predictable or boring
They make me feel guilty

Looking at recent survey's I don't think much has changed. Much of that list, though, has to do with feelings – you know the heart more than the head. But faith is head and heart and to live with Jesus we not only need to love him, heart, but know him, head. To be able know him we need to know how to see him, how to hear him how to touch him. When I look at that list I just mentioned, I come to one conclusion – these folks have simply not seen, heard or touched Jesus – everything else is just an excuse.

For most of us we have the miracles of ordinary bread, water and wine becoming precious body and blood down pat; but what about out there - outside these doors? Here we can see, hear and feel Jesus, but what about out there? That can be a bit harder and that is the reason why we find Jesus at a wedding feast today. Unfortunately like our

brethren that do not come here on Sunday, we likely have been unable to see, hear and touch Jesus in everyday life. Maybe looking at the big picture, we are not so different. The miracles of water becoming wine happens every day, every where. The key is to know how to see them, to feel them and to hear them. To do this we must go to a quiet place, shutting out the world and asking Jesus: how do I see you more clearly, how to I hear more distinctly, how do I reach out to touch you? Then like coming here every Sunday we need to do this regularly, that's how we get better at it; strengthening our faith.

I know sounds like a retreat – and I guess it is. For most people a retreat was likely not on their New Years resolutions list, but it should be and should be number one. When we can master the heady part of faith we can see the world differently and the ordinary water of life can become the good wine of life. And like most people we will want more.

When life can be more like good wine than ordinary water, we know we have mastered the ability to see everyday miracles and like the disciples in the gospel, we come to believe in him more deeply both here and out there.

For those that have left our church, it will likely be some time to get them back to this place on Sunday – regular Sunday's. So I think it's far easier to search out a friend or family member we haven't seen in a while and don't initially ask them back to Sunday Mass, but instead to say...the Harvest Festival, the Reverse Raffle, the Lenten Fish Fry's, or the Carnival Dinner we celebrate this weekend – you know like the wedding feast at Cana. Let Jesus then work his miracles and maybe a like the disciples, a few more will begin to believe in him and want more maybe even on Sunday.

If we are successful, we not only enhance our lives, but the lives of others and isn't that what we are truly called to do – helping Jesus make wine out of water? You know living in a world where Jesus no longer asks “where have you been”, but “nice to see you again”.

Deacon Tom Sheehan
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