

“Show Off?”

Isaiah 62:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

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Today’s Gospel reading is commonly known as... from the very first line... “the Wedding at Cana.” It marks the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry... you know, that whole three years worth. (Think of the impact he had in just over 36 months... SO much more that we can accomplish in a LIFETIME!) And just as significantly, it is also the occasion of the very first miracle performed by Jesus... at least, that is documented in Scripture. Now, it may be just me, but have any of you ever thought about WHY Jesus chose THIS particular time and place? Of all the places he could have chosen for his ‘coming out party’ as the miracle-working Son of God and Savior of the world... from palaces to Temples to crowded city streets... WHY did he choose a small-town wedding reception as the place to perform the FIRST in a LONG line of miraculous acts? AND, of all the miraculous healings, exorcisms, and mass-feedings he would become known for, why something as comparatively minor as keeping the wine flowing? (Well, maybe not quite so ‘minor’ to some of you... 😊)

From the look of things, he and his disciples had been invited to a wedding, along with his Mom Mary, and had gone to simply hang out with her and some of their friends. Just chillin’ with some of their ‘peeps.’ And then his Mother comes up and tells him that “They have no wine.” To which he responds like so many other sons would have to a mother’s request: “SO?” Well, a *little* more gracious than that. **“What concern is that to me, and you?”** Or, in the NIV, **“Why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come.”** (John 2:4)

And yet, after this seemingly disinterested reply, when Mom says **“Do whatever he tells you,”** (Passive-aggressive response?) Jesus quickly goes to work. When the ‘cistern-sized’ jars are filled with water, He quickly says to take a taste to the chief steward, the ‘wedding planner,’ ‘Franque.’ 😊 (Father o’ Bride”) Who immediately compliments the bridegroom for saving the BEST wine for last.

Again, WHY? Why did he seemingly change his mind as to this concern for the embarrassment of the wedding party actually being HIS? Was Jesus simply ‘playing to the home crowd?’ Did he not want this mother to ‘lose face’... to demonstrate that the faith she had in her ‘boy’ was indeed well-founded? Or, to show to his childhood friends just why His Heavenly Father

would declare him 'beloved,' and so 'well-pleased' with His Son. To **"Show off"** this Divine power he had been keeping pent up for some 30 years?

I know that this sounds like **heresy**... that a perfect God, made flesh in Jesus Christ, would be subject to such a fallen human trait as 'showing off.' That term certainly connotes a sense of selfish pride, or arrogance, or boastfulness. But how about if we substitute another term that might be considered synonymous: **DEMONSTRATE**. Which means **"to show clearly... to prove by reasoning or evidence."** This miracle, done in this humble little town in front of common folks living out their everyday lives, served to clearly show how UN-common this son of a carpenter... 'Mary's boy'... truly was. He did this miracle of 'instant fermentation' NOT to 'show off'.... But rather, to 'show US' who He was. And to show 'WHY' we should follow. In those closing words of John in today's passage, ***"Jesus did this, the first of his signs... and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed him."*** (2:11) Jesus' signs... God's glory... our belief.

Exactly WHY did Jesus choose this particular place and time? Only He and His Father know. Perhaps to show the importance of the Law, like where it says to "Honor your Father and Mother." Perhaps to show how Jesus walks with us not just in those dark moments of struggle, but in the joyful times of celebration. That he does truly care about ALL the different aspects of our overall health and well being. That He uses the gifts that He has been given to make others' lives better... for the 'common good.' Not to 'show off'... but to **demonstrate** various ways to use those gifts... to **reveal** the **glory** of **God**, in order that those who follow Him might **believe**.

It is that example Jesus gives us of using gifts to make other lives better... to demonstrate the glory of God that is working through His followers... that you and I are to talk about and USE. That is why this passage from Paul's letter to the church in Corinth... Welsh... and Lake Charles... is SO important. Not just for people removed from us by geography and time, but for US. You and Me! I want you to join me in saying that statement of verse 7: ***"To EACH... is GIVEN... the manifestation of the SPIRIT... for the COMMON GOOD."*** ((1 Cor. 12:7)

If you truly believe in your heart in Jesus Christ, whom God raised from the dead... and you have prayed for God's Holy Spirit to work through you in living a life that bears witness to that belief... then you have been given a manifestation, a GIFT, of that Spirit. You think NOT? Well, in the words of ESPN's **Lee Corso**, ***"Not so fast, my friend!"*** I would lift up that 'laundry list'

of gifts ('laundry,' as in, 'washed' by the Spirit 😊) that Paul speaks of; : **wisdom... knowledge... faith... healing... prophecy... discernment of spirits... speaking, and interpretation of tongues.**

As I look around this room, I see many examples of those gifted with wisdom... knowledge... faith... discernment... **healing**. Now on this last one, you might think, 'Well I have never healed anyone.' And maybe not physically. Tho' you sure WORK for the One who does. You've certainly prayed for others' healing. And you may even be in a vocation that works very closely with the 'Great Physician.' But ALL of you can sure bring 'healing' to someone who is hurting emotionally, or spiritually. By words that can certainly expedite God's healing action in another.

Prophecy. While our mind usually goes to Biblical prophets like Isaiah or Ezekiel or Malachi, we should remember that a 'prophecy' is, by definition, simply "a statement that something will happen in the future." Like, for instance, "a small membership congregation will build a new church in a growing part of town." Hmmm...

My point is, by virtue of our membership in the body of Christ known as His Church... those who are baptized by water and the Spirit... we do not go into their journey of faith in an all-too-faithLESS world ALONE! Or without the 'equipment' to fight the good fight of belief in Jesus. You ALL have gifts. Gifts of which Paul >> says, "**All of these are activated by (the work of) one and the same Spirit, who allots to EACH ONE individually just as the Spirit chooses.**" (John 2:11)

Today YOU, the cong. Of Welsh/Lake Charles, will affirm fellow church members in recognizing some of the gifts 'allotted' to them by that 'one and the same Spirit.' They will soon answer questions that affirm their willingness to heed the call made on their lives... not merely by a 'jury of their peers', but by GOD. Those questions come from our constitutional 'manual of operations,' otherwise known as the 'Book of Order.' (clever name!) or by the initials, 'BoO.' BOO! It CAN be a little 'scary'...

That 'BoO' does actually have some pretty comforting, encouraging language to guide our lives as a community of believers. Particularly with regards to our roles within the church:

"All ministry in the Church is a gift from Jesus Christ. ...While the ministry is one, specific forms of ministry may emphasize special tasks and skills." 'Forms' such as Deacons, Ruling Elders,

Teaching Elders (Ministers). It also says, however, that *“Members and officers alike serve mutually under the mandate of Christ who is the chief minister of all.”* (G-6.0100, 4)

We should recognize that no matter what ‘special tasks and skills’ anyone of us may possess, we ALL, members and officers alike, serve together under the tutelage of the CHIEF minister, Jesus Christ. That same Book of Order goes on to say that *“From the beginning God created women and men for community and called a people into covenant. Jesus called, commissioned and promised to be present to a people gathered in his name. The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, orders, and empowers the new community of the covenant. To each member, that Spirit gives gifts for building up the body of Christ and for equipping it for the work of ministry. A Christian’s personal response to God is in community.”* (W-1.1005)

Officer and member alike, you have been CALLED by Jesus... and COMMISSIONED by Jesus... who has ‘PROMISED to be PRESENT.’ In all circumstances. Even a wedding in a small town. KNOW that his ‘commission’ of you involves gifts of the Spirit for building up the body of Christ. To equip others for the work of ministry. Those gifts are not given for you to hide away, to keep for yourself. But to demonstrate the power of God at work within you. When it comes to the gifts you have to **reveal** the **glory** of **God**, in order that those who follow Him might **believe**... is one of the few reasons it can be OK to **“Show off”** ... to *demonstrate* your faith in a living, loving Lord Jesus Christ!