



Homily for
SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
16/17 January, 2016

Fr. Dwayne's homily follows....

In the gospel we just heard, we see Jesus doing his part to give drink to the thirsty by providing wine at a wedding where they had run out of wine. So, maybe going to Knickers to quench our thirst isn't such a silly idea after all!

I. Back in the 1700s a clergyman by the name of William Paley suggested that if a person found a watch in the middle of field, its intricate design and practical purpose would lead that person to the conclusion that the watch must have had a maker.

He then went on to apply that idea to the whole of creation. If we look around us and see the beauty of creation, we should be led to the conclusion that the world must have a creator.

That would be one way to be led to a belief in the existence of God, but during the Enlightenment but it also led to the dangerous perception that God could create the universe and, like a watchmaker, wind up the clock and

then it sit there ticking away by itself.

In other words, this view of God as a watchmaker could eliminate the perception of God as a personal God, as a God with whom we could have a personal relationship.

II. The miracle at Cana – of changing water into wine – clearly points in the direction of a belief in God. In his gospel, St. John tells us this is the first of Jesus' signs. All together there will be seven "signs" with the Resurrection as the seventh sign. These signs are not intended to be cute miracles Jesus works – rather, they are intended to show God *breaking into* human history, *being part of* human life, ***personally concerned for*** human beings. This first sign shows the establishment of God's reign in the world has begun. And because of this first sign, Jesus' disciples began to ***believe in him***.

III. Another way to communicate this concept of a personal God is with the experience of marriage. The intimacy of the marital relationship is used as an image of the kind of relationship God wants with us.

Note the tender, personal, warm language of the first reading: God will vindicate the people of Israel...they will be called by a new name...they shall be a glorious crown, a royal diadem...no longer thought of as forsaken...but "espoused" – like a bride – "As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you."

This is not an image of a God who is distant, remote, uninvolved!!!

And in the New Testament, the first sign Jesus works is at a wedding – which was a big deal in middle eastern culture. Jesus, who is the face of the Father's Mercy as Pope Francis has taught us, attended weddings, cried at funerals, walked and talked and shared meals with people from every walk of life. He was intimately and passionately involved with every aspect of human life.

Jesus shows us a God who wants to have a personal relationship with us.

IV. So, what is your concept of God?

- is God like a watch maker who winds up the watch and walks away
- or like a puppeteer, pulling strings and manipulating the winds and waves and earthquakes and people's live
- or maybe like the conductor of symphony sending signals to the players about what note to play and when
- or like a chess player and we human beings are pawns and rooks, victims of the Great Chess Play in the sky?
- or is God, in your belief, a personal God who is present to us throughout the entirety of our lives?

Certainly the themes of the Year of Mercy will reveal to us over and over the love and compassion and mercy of a personal God.

We see this personal care in the spiritual and corporal work of mercy –

practical ways in which you and I participate in God's reign of earth. We become the hands and heart and feet of this personal God.

V. The Communion antiphon for today is “You have prepared a table before me, and

how precious is the chalice that quenches my thirst.”

We come here - to this altar – to quench our thirsts for a personal God. May

who encounter us see in us a reflection of God’s mercy.

Fr. Kyle’s homily follows....

What are you thirsty for? And I’m not talking about a top-shelf glass of wine or tasty home-brewed beer. What areas of your life are dry and parched and in need of a drink? What are you spiritually thirsty for?

In today’s gospel, we hear that there is a lack of wine at the wedding which, I don’t need to tell you, is a huge party foul these days but an even bigger social faux pas back in Jesus’ time. People were thirsty for wine but the wine was running short. It is at this moment and in this problem that Mary steps in to make sure people do not go thirsty. In doing so, she provides us with an example of prayer, a way to make sure whatever is dry and parched in our life, whatever we are thirsting for might receive the abundant wine of God’s grace. There are three things in particular that model the importance of prayer in our lives.

1. The first thing Mary does is recognizes a problem; perhaps even before the bride and groom and certainly before all of the other guests who are distracted by everything else. It is so easy in our lives to get busy and distracted with everything else going on that we don’t take the time to pray and recognize our spiritual dryness and our spiritual thirst for God.
2. She does not hesitate or get anxious but runs to Jesus and asks for help. How often in our life do we get stressed or anxious about problems in our life and still fail to bring it to prayer; fail to ask for God’s help. While Mary goes to Jesus with her problem to seek his help, all of the other people at the party were seemingly going to just sit there and go thirsty. When we recognize problems or thirsts in our life, we must not hesitate to run to Jesus in prayer and ask for his help.
3. Finally, she leaves it in Jesus’ hands trusting that he will fix it. She does not tell him how she wants him to fix the problem or tell him what she thinks the solution is; All she says is,

“they have no wine”. She simply observes the problem and confidently places it at the feet of Jesus. So often in pray we have a tendency to tell God to fix our problems in the way we want to. Instead of trusting God, we tell him to sign on the dotted line of our plans for our life. Instead, all we need to do is confidently present our need and thirst for his help before Him.

There is no doubt there are problems in our life and we thirst for God’s help. Mary in today’s gospel gives us an example of prayer that we may not run out of the wine of God’s grace; that we may not go thirsty. What are we truly thirsty for in our life? And do we follow Mary’s example of prayer so that we might rejoice in the abundant wine of God’s love.