

John 2:1-11

The miracle at the wedding feast in Cana. It was ten miles North of Nazareth...This is the first sign of Jesus' divinity in John's Gospel's!

Seems simple enough but there's something going on here below the surface...as always!

In the gospel today, how do we reconcile a story about Divine generosity and abundance with a world seemingly still in tremendous need?!

In a world where violence is prevalent, where children go to bed hungry, where people are sick and alone...hey Jesus could you come over here...we are out of wine too!

Many of us are frustrated and some of our patience has run out!

Now we are in good company... following in the footsteps of Mary by prodding Jesus into Divine action...Hey Jesus give us a miracle...show us some of your power!

And note that the concern for the community here is Mary's not so much Jesus'???

When she says they have no wine...Jesus asks what is that to you and to me?! It's not my problem...

So what's the answer here?!

How do we justify God's goodness in the face of suffering and evil? Now some folks rationalize and say... well it's not in God's good time...others say it relies on human compassion to activate God's will... like those who cried out in Egypt to be heard by God.

And still others say we must be like the persistent widow and pester God into action...see sometimes Jesus falls asleep in the boat.

So which is it? I think its all of the above to some extent. There is no formula for a relationship...think about your own relationships...is there a one size fits all?

As we see throughout the Bible... God is as everchanging as we are! In scriptures there is a movement...an arc to our relationship with God...it evolves...covenants change.

Though regardless of God's motives...as if we could ever truly know such a thing...it appears to me that God consistently has one major motivation... regardless of our circumstances...and that thing is God's deep desire to be in relationship with us.

So can we trust in our relationship with our Divine Parent? (faith = trust Aman)

Can we trust God to be generous and abundant to us...and based on our own perceptions and desires, can we nudge God with our own observations of the world...Hey Jesus we're out of wine over here!

See it's Mary here who senses the human situation and she takes charge!

We can also be like Jesus' own mother... impatient for God's will to unfold...perhaps Jesus needs to be pushed a little here.

Can we trust God when we need or want something right now...I know that's true for me... and I always know when I am pushing a little too hard and not leaving enough room for God's participation.

But that's always the challenge isn't it...sometimes if we push too hard then how do we know who's will it actually is? Is it just my own will and desires being projected onto God...in order to rationalize my own sense of the Divine?

See it's really challenging to participate with the unseen Divine will of the universe! So many times, it's really just us pushing our own desires out there! What I want and need now from my own point of view for my own life in my own circumstances.

In order to understand our relationship with God we have to think of it more like something in motion - a dance if you will... where sometimes God leads and sometimes, we lead. It's back and forth...a wave...breathing in and breathing out...sometimes we give...and sometimes we receive.

But our relationship with God has one more major aspect to it that differentiates it from other relationships we may have? Notice there is always a focus on community and wholeness whenever God acts. Mary isn't just asking for herself is she?

In the ancient Jewish marriage ceremony, it would be a communal event lasting many days and it would be a major embarrassment for a family to run out of wine. Mary is not concerned about herself but about the relationship between the two new families (the brides' and the grooms') coming together for the first time to become something new...a larger community created together.

Mary nudges Jesus on behalf of both families and their wholeness...it's not about herself...its about the community!

Notice there is a repeating pattern here that plays itself out throughout all of Scripture.

There is a Brokenness of relationships in community... followed by a Scarcity Mentality...not enough...it's us or them...my will or their will...me and my tribe's welfare above theirs. And you see this mindset all over the place today.

At the wedding feast two tribes are literally coming together to become one in order to establish a larger greater tribe together. It wasn't just the couple becoming one...it was all their families and with it their tribes also becoming connected.

Someone cries out to God to take notice of the situation...we implore God for help!

Then God takes what we offer...in today's story it's water...and God sets about a Transformation for the benefit of the whole of the community.

A Transformation, something new is born in the universe...God takes something we have and God transforms it into something the whole community needs...from me to we together.

Here there is wholeness and restoration... and with Divine grace there is always abundance...overflowing...the new thing becomes God touched... a wine surpassing that which they could not have ever made themselves.

God in relationship with us together...Jesus in relationship with His mother...and all those relationships directly related to the health and well-being of the whole.

We bring something...and God responds...then we do something... and God does something...a give and a take...a relationship!

We participate in God's reconciling work in the world...always!
It's never just God being a helicopter parent to us for our own individual wants and needs.

We learn and we do...and yes sometimes we will require our parent's help! Sometimes things are beyond us or out of our control!

Today in Paul's letter to the Church in Corinth... Paul is pleading for the Church there to see the bigger perspective in order to bring God's wholeness into their larger fledgling Christian community.

What troubled Paul was that certain members of their community felt entitled or above others...mmm. Some members of their community would use their personal divine gifts as a way to assert their own power and status in the community for their own well-being!

Can you imagine such a thing...certain people in a religious community asserting themselves as having more power and status than someone else in the Communal Body of Christ!

Yes we are all equal.....but.....there's the BUT!
But the brain is way more important than the feet! The Priest is more important than the congregation.

Now Paul didn't discredit anyone, but rather he pointed out that we ALL have a touch of the Divine within us...a spark...The Holy Spirit!

Paul pulls the camera back to give their early churches a glimpse of the One Community of Christ. In wholeness we all have gifts from the Spirit of God...and none of us should be more celebrated than another. Rather we are all a part of a greater whole...something bigger than me.

It's not about me ...but rather about us, together...using all of our Spiritual gifts together in concert for the betterment of the community as a whole!

It's not about ME...it's about WE!

We are to Participate together as one with God and one another.

The One Spirit of God, with each of us reflecting various aspects of divinity, that when used together, reflect God's will for God's creation and our Holy Family Community together as one.

We have to play the instruments we were gifted to play (whether that be a violin or a triangle) ...together we are all playing different instruments...all participating in the same orchestra.

But we are all to be playing the SAME SONG...and no one should be more celebrated than another...because in the end it's the song that matters...the whole...the Body of Christ together as One!
That's how transformation and abundance are created.

And just as we have to nudge God at times to move, we must also nudge ourselves to act in concert with one another for the greater good of God's creation as a whole!

I wonder what the world would look like if we all worked together for the greater good of us ALL...and for the good of all creation!?

Today we look at our part in the greater good...for ourselves, for our church, and for the wider community here where we live and serve.

Our Annual meeting today reflects the gifts that you all have been given here at Holy Family... for our Christian mission together here in Laurel Springs. Today we celebrate and give thanks for the gifts of the Spirit in each and every one of you!

And as we pull the camera back, we show the greater good that our church has done for the community at large...to ease the suffering of those within our sphere of influence here in NJ. We see what the fruits of our efforts have been in Jesus' name, as we pour out our abundance into the cups of those neighbors whose cups have gone empty.

Never, ever be afraid to nudge God and each another... whenever... and wherever you see that people have no wine...wherever you experience brokenness...and wherever there is a community in need.

Now let's go and turn some water into wine together for the sake and good of us ALL!

your faithful servant,
carmen