

Pastor's letter

January 17, 2010

Dear parishioners,

Last Sunday, the first Sunday in ordinary time and the Baptism of Jesus found me away from my ministerial service. I took a week off and stayed home to study the blessed language of English. Blessed because, as someone told me, the language spoken in Paradise is no longer Italian, but English, and it seems that one of the requirements necessary to be able to enter there is to know the English language. So, being the good Christian that I am, I took a week off to a glance at the future. Besides, I think it was healthy for you to have a weekend off from seeing my face.

In this second Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Gospel presents to us the episode of the Wedding feast of Cana in Galilee. The miracle of the transformation of water into wine was the first miracle that Jesus performed during His public life, showing to His disciples His Divine Nature.

I would like, to focus, if I may on two aspects that are proposed by Jesus and Mary, the two main protagonists in this Sunday's Gospel.

It is interesting to note how many times the Gospel speaks to us about weddings, festivities with friends, and invitations for dinner. Jesus was a man who liked to be in the company of others company. He liked to attend festivities and to be among people. He was always open and available to enter into contact with people of all kinds, and share with them even the simplest and most common human experiences. He was not a person that held Himself outside of, or above, the normal life of other human beings. Jesus, the Son of God, was a man of delight, of party and of joy. It seems strange but this aspect of happiness in Jesus is an aspect that reflects perfectly the humaneness of Jesus' life, but unfortunately for us it is difficult to meditate on it or even take that into consideration. Why do I want to stress this manner of life in Jesus? Because so many times we build in our mind the wrong idea of God. Throughout the centuries we were educated to think of God as being stern and rigid, and unfortunately we still hold this idea. If we really want to know God, we must in a certain sense, shake from our mind that image of God which is so far from reality.

We cannot understand the God of Jesus Christ. We cannot understand His death on the cross for us, until we understand that our God is the God of joy, the God that loves the serenity of company, the God who desires our happiness, the God that invites everybody to live their life intensely. He who is the God of love.

Mary, the second very important protagonist of this Gospel, said to Jesus, “*They have no wine.*” And she received a very harsh answer, “*Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?*” If we read this passage of the Gospel with superficiality, probably the first thing that comes to mind is that Jesus had no respect for His mother or in this case was quite rude. But, if we try to analyze and reflect on it, perhaps we can understand the reason of what appears to be an arrogant answer.

Let’s start from the response from Mary to Jesus, “*Do whatever He tells you.*” Actually this answer is directed to the servants, but of course it includes also Jesus. In other words, Mary said to her son, “Now is the time, people need to know who you really are!”

With these words, Mary gives the start to the mission of Jesus. With that answer we understand that she, like Jesus, knew very well what the future held for Him. Probably Jesus, before showing everybody else that He was the Son of God, was waiting for a sign directly from the Father. And instead, God chose His mother to let Him know when it was time to manifest Himself completely.

I don’t know if I have succeeded in giving you a clear idea about the two aspects presented by Jesus and Mary, mentioned beforehand. In my point of view, Jesus and Mary gave us the right directions for living this life in the best way.

In the first part of the letter I referred to the joyful aspect of Jesus and His mission of love for us, and it is clear that the fundamental point of God’s presence in our lives is just that. God desires our good, our happiness and that only in Him can we give meaning to our lives, even when things seem to be going contrary to our will, and are so difficult to accept.

Those who believe and have faith in God never give up. Mary at the Wedding of Cana didn’t give up. She knew that God loves us. With the example of Mary and under her leadership, always and every moment it is the right time to start again. With her words, “*Do whatever He tells you.*” we can continue to have hope and confidence in life.

These words of Mary are the only words in the whole Gospel, directed to us, “*Do whatever He tells you.*” Live the words of Jesus. Live the Gospel. Not only listen or proclaim, but give life to the words of the Gospel and everyday your life will be filled with the happiness of God.

Peace, Father Luciano