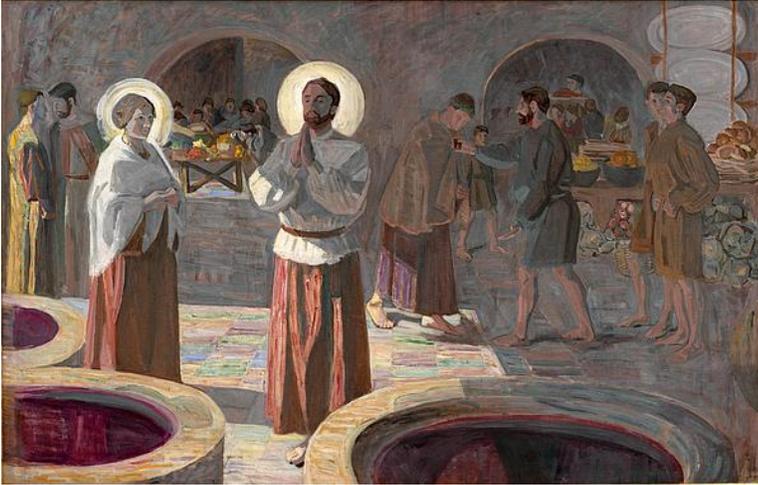




ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY January 20 & BEYOND”

“Greater things than these shall YOU do”



Here is our Gospel reading for this coming Sunday, January 20, 2019:

‘Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. When the steward of the feast tasted the water now

become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.’ (John 2:1-11)

Let’s make note of a several things before considering what this means for us today.

First, there is a miracle. Miracles are events that defy our known ways that the physics of the earth and the universe work. It is not an acceptable scientific or physical truth that a human being can “walk on water.” It is not an acceptable truth that wine can be created instantaneously from water, other than to note that the normal methods of producing wine will include some amount of water in order to bring the fruit to harvestable readiness (somewhere between 2 to 5 gallons out of the soil and air per glass of wine for dry farming, and 12 to 15 gallons for irrigation-based vineyards). These are the common Gospel stories during the season of Sundays after Epiphany, when Jesus is manifested to the world. You can add in feeding 5,000 and also 4,000 people from a basketful of bread and fish. Or

commanding a tree to wither, and it does immediately. Or raising someone to life who has been dead for three or more days. Or finding gold coins in a fish's mouth that Jesus said would be there (I'm pretty sure we've all heard stories of things found in fish, like coins, rings, bullets, and more...but to be told to go fish to find a fish that has the coins in its mouth in a specific area, and the first fish has the promised coins – that's pretty much a miracle)!

Second, somebody else got the credit for the wine brought out late to the party, even though no recognition of a miracle is included in that credit. And Jesus said nothing.

Third, somebody DID witness the miracle – the servants – but they said nothing.

Fourth, this is the third of three stories that kick off the season of Epiphany, or the Manifestation of Christ to the World (“the Gentiles”). The first was the world coming to Jesus with the Wise men from other Gentile nations/countries/peoples. The second and third, Jesus' Baptism and presentation as the Messiah and going forth with the LOVE of God, and the Miracle at Cana of Galilee (this one with water into wine) is the presentation of the POWER of God in the Messiah.

My thoughts about this Gospel lesson for you are informed this week by the second reading of Sunday, the Epistle, which is also taken from the New Testament. In that lesson, St. Paul enumerates nine spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit given deliberately to various members of the Church as they are empowered by the Holy Spirit, such as gifts of healing, and words of prophecy, and speaking in tongues. We've seen these regularly in the Body of Christ since the feast of Pentecost, and even before. There's another one worth mentioning here from Paul that says, to another [is given] the working of miracles.

When the steward of the marriage feast thanks the bridegroom for providing more wine, our first thought is, “No, no! JESUS provided the miracle!”, and you'd be right. But when Jesus doesn't say anything it points to another truth, that Jesus is very willing share the wealth when it comes to miracles, and then provides the power to see it happen. Granted, the steward's presumption in this story is incorrect. In fact, I'm sure the Bridegroom is just as surprised as the steward! And of course, there are witnesses as to what really happened. But if Jesus is willing to not say anything at this moment to demand proper credit, the room is left open for Jesus to actually and really delegate his miracle making power to others, and let the witnesses see someone else besides Him doing them. Of course, the Power for such is

His. But how many times have you heard someone trying to take credit for something somebody else really did?! Happens all the time. Not with Jesus.

In the 14th chapter of John, Jesus in fact says, “Greater things than these shall you do.” Paul, besides giving witness to seeing disciples in Corinth working miracles, says in his letter to the Ephesians, “Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we could ever ask or imagine!”

Being a follower of Jesus Christ, and empowered by his Spirit, is not and can not be minimized to a couple of prayers here and there that get answered. This is Power, baby! And He wants us to make use of it. The PROPER use of it is also spoken of in this Gospel lesson, and that is found at the end when John the apostle, writing his Gospel of Jesus, says, “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.”

This is what I think this means:

Not everybody will be given the ability for “working miracles”, in fact, it is a small percentage of church members who will. But whether it is miracles or any other display of God’s Power, it is to be understood as a “sign” and a visible “power”, that is, manifested Glory of God, for this one purpose: that men and women, boys and girls, will BELIEVE in Jesus.

Miracles for any other reason, according to this scripture, would be only attention getters for the person working them. And we know from the scriptures, as in the story of Simon the Magician in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, some people will pay a hefty sum of money to have control of such an ability for their own selfish purposes.

With that in mind, this story, along with Paul’s letter about spiritual gifts, lets us begin to realize that God wants to do very, very powerful things THROUGH US, and our job is to say “YES!”, and ask for the power to make it so. God can change our understanding of physical reality; He wants us to be able to do the same.

Fr. Robert G. Eaton, Interim Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Second Sunday of the Epiphany

Isaiah 62:1-5 Psalm 96:1-10 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 John 2:1-11

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Second Sunday of the Epiphany

9:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

Annual Meeting (Parish Hall)

—The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)