

Since today's Gospel is about a wedding – a few quotes about weddings and marriage:

James Thurber said: "The most dangerous food in all the world – is wedding cake."

Ruth Graham said: "A happy marriage-- is the union of two forgivers."

Lyndon Johnson once said: " Only two things are necessary to keep one's wife happy. One is to let her think she is having her way; the other, is to let her have it."

And Mignon McLaughlin: "A successful marriage requires falling in love many times—always with the same person."

And since our Gospel is also about wine, how about these truths:

A French proverb proclaims: "The thing about drinking wine is --- only the first bottle is expensive."

Robert Louis Stevenson said that "wine –is bottled poetry."

An Italian proverb says, "One barrel of wine can work more miracles--- than a church full of saints."

And finally, Ben Franklin, says of Jesus' actions at Cana: "We hear of the conversion of water into wine as a miracle. But this conversion is, through the goodness of God, made every day before our eyes. Behold the rain which descends from heaven upon our vineyards; there it enters the roots of the vines, to be changed into wine – a constant proof that God loves us, and loves to see us happy."

The thing about weddings and wine – is that in the Scriptures, at least – these things are symbolic – they stand for something else: a wedding feast was seen as a symbol of the heavenly banquet – and an abundance of wine is often a symbol of the kingdom of God: The Prophet Joel proclaims that on the day the Messiah comes – the mountains will drip with new wine. (Joel 4:18)

So no accident that the first sign, the first miracle Jesus performs in the Gospel of John – is producing abundant wine at a wedding feast --- the message would not have been missed by those in Jesus' day that something new is afoot – that the kingdom of God has become present ----- it's symbolism would be missed only by us 21st century Americans.

Jesus comes as the Messiah – to bring about the beginnings of God's kingdom – a kingdom that reaches its fulfillment only in the age to come – when we will all be gathered at the wedding feast in the heavenly kingdom.

Jesus begins the ball rolling – but it is up to us to complete his work. And his mother, Mary, gives us the advice we all need to be successful in our mission as disciples: "Do whatever he tells you." Which first of all means we need to listen to Jesus – and then take action. We just can't be listeners of the word of God – we must also be doers of the word.

We must take the varied spiritual gifts that God has given us – produced all by the same spirit – whether it be wisdom, knowledge, gifts of healing, mighty deeds, prophecy, discernment, or speaking in tongues or interpreting them --- and build the kingdom of God – the heavenly banquet, the New Jerusalem – right in our midst by our forgiving words and compassionate actions

It all starts by listening to Jesus – and then "doing whatever he tells us."

Today is the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – and we should not get too comfortable – because we only progress up to the 5th Sunday of Ordinary Time – before the season of Lent is upon us.

I think one of the things that holds these few Sundays of Ordinary Time together as a nice little package – is that over these weeks we will hear stories in the Gospel of those who do listen to Jesus – and act on his words ----- and those who do not listen to Jesus, and thus fail to act on his words.

We, of course, need to decide which of these two groups we are going to fall in with.

Be sure to open your ears for next week's Gospel – as Jesus sets the agenda for his ministry and for those who follow him.

Jesus tells us what types of actions are involved in the kingdom of God – but then comes the hard work – because as Mary tells us – then we must do “whatever he tells us.”