

HOMILY

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 15-16, 2022

I was reading about something that happened to someone else that I have always feared might happen to me. A wedding planner named Roxy Zapala discovered at the last minute that the church had been scheduled for a funeral and a wedding at the same time. Roxy realized that she had to keep the wedding guests outside of the church for about an hour. She spotted an ice cream truck down the street and convinced the owner to park the truck at the church and serve ice cream to the waiting guests. Everyone assumed that this was part of the wedding entertainment. The guests had a great time, and this was one of the things that made the couple's wedding unique and special.

We had another wedding mishap in the Gospel reading today. The couple ran out of wine. At that time, wedding celebrations went on for days, and running out of wine would have been a major embarrassment. Mary goes over to Jesus and just tells him the problem. Then she tells the servers to do whatever Jesus tells them to do. Mary tells them to trust that Jesus will solve the problem, and he does. The servers filled the jars with water, and Jesus changed the water into wine. The servers never would have expected this, but they did what Jesus told them and the problem was solved.

There are several things that I notice about this miracle and all of Jesus' miracles. First of all, Mary accepts the reality of the situation for what it is. She does not try and find out how this happened or who is to blame. Secondly, she takes the problem to Jesus and trusts that he will help them solve the problem. Third, the miracles are never done in a showy way. Jesus performs miracles as a sign of who he is, but he does not want to be known as the miracle worker. He wants people to follow him by loving and serving one another. Fourth, he never performs the miracles alone. He always works with the people around him. He does not say: "Relax; I will take care of this." The people do their part in filling the water jars with water, and then Jesus does his part. The people do their part without knowing exactly how things will turn out.

Let's get back to my wedding planner, Roxy Zapala. She accepts the situation that she cannot change right away. She could have tried to find out who had double booked and screamed at them. She could have demanded that they get that dead body out of the church. After all, the couple booked their wedding over a year in advance, and they should take priority. She could have confronted the priest and demanded that he resolve the situation; but she did not do any of these things. She accepts that she is going to have to keep the wedding guests outside the church for an hour even though that is stressful and probably causing her a lot of anxiety. Now I do not know if Roxy prayed at this point, it did not say that in the article, but this is why prayer is important. If we pray, we become very aware that we do not have to solve this problem alone; and we can trust Jesus to help us the way he has in the past. Now, I do not know if Jesus performed a miracle that day. I do not totally know how Jesus performs miracles because he is God and I am not; but this is how I have seen him work. Maybe he arranged for the ice cream truck to be there. Maybe he encouraged the truck driver to go along with the plan to park the truck at the church. Maybe he put the ice cream idea in Roxy's head. Jesus' miracles tend not to be showy. He tends to work through our human nature. Everyone worked with him and did their part without knowing exactly how things would turn out, and everything turned out great.

So, if you are faced with a problem situation that you cannot change, accept what is even if it seems difficult or causes a lot of anxiety. Pray, turn the problem over to Jesus and ask for his help. Know that Jesus works through our human nature and helps us to solve problems in a way that does not necessarily appear miraculous. Finally, be open to what comes. Sometimes solutions come that would have never occurred to you, and you are not sure if they will work; but give them a try anyway. When something occurs to me or happens that I never would have expected, it leads me to believe that it is from God, because God is God and I am not.

Love & Peace,
Fr. Jim