

Homily-2nd Sunday of the Year (C)- “Responsible Stewardship”

“Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him”.

Beloved, these words taken from our Gospel passage ([John 2:1-11](#)) capture why biblical scholars divide John’s Gospel into two main parts: “The Book of the Signs” (John 1:19 - 12:50) and “The Book of Glory” (John 13:1 - 20:31). While the “The Book of Signs” deals with areas as the Wedding at Cana, the Samaritan Woman, Healing at the Pool of Bethesda, the Man Born Blind, the Raising of Lazarus, among others, “The Book of Glory” deals with his Prayer for the Church, Passion Narrative, Crucifixion, Resurrection Appearances, and so on. The simple message Jesus puts across is that through the signs, he will arrive at his glory.

The signs Jesus performed – even that of saving the couple in today’s gospel from imminent embarrassment – are his acts of responsible stewardship leading up to his glorification. Consider the prayer Jesus addressed to the Heavenly Father, “I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made” (John 17:4-5, RSV). On her part, Mary used her gift of prayer and intercession to implore Jesus (even without the knowledge of the hosts), saying, “They have no wine.” She also prepared the servers in advance, “Do whatever he [Jesus] tells you.” This is an extraordinary act of stewardship; she prepared the ground to save the situation. Isn’t it wonderful that the first miracle Jesus ever did came about through Mary’s splendid intercession?

Evidently, from the above, the stewardship expected of the members of God’s family is not just about money or capital campaign; it is about working out our “own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12). Our salvation ultimately lies in the hand of God. However, God wants us to play our part in the process. God did not create us to be self-centered; he created us to live in love and solidarity. And he promises us a handsome reward: “Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Matt 25:34-36). This is why the Church teaches the need for Spiritual and Corporal Works of mercy. They are signs that lead to our glorification in Christ.

Whatever blessings God has given us, we should use to worship him. God will not demand what he has not given; so there is no ground for complaint. We are to grow to that level where we readily look out for the opportunity to give more and more. As St. Paul declares, “I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls” (2Cor 12:15). The Church will always challenge the faithful to greater heroic acts of faith. We have an obligation to build up his kingdom here on earth. There is no one among us who has nothing to give. You may not have money; then give what you have. Just take a cue from Peter and John in their encounter with a man lame. They had no money yet they exercised proper stewardship of God’s gifts, saying to the man: “Look at us . . . I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” (Acts 3:4, 6).

In the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer, the Church prays, “And that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him, he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father, as his first gift to those who believe, to complete his work on earth and bring us the fullness of grace”. What a summary of the purpose of our gifts in Christ! Thus, our Second Reading ([1Cor 12:4-11](#)) stresses, “To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit”. What benefit? St. Paul explains that “His gifts were... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12). The different ministries in our parish are opportunities to put our own gifts and endowments at the service of God and his people. Do not bury your gift like the “wicked servant” (Luke 19:22).

Finally, it is clear that all the spiritual and material gifts are for service, neither for spiritual pride nor for materialism. Nor can we afford to become like the ‘rich fool’ who lived for himself alone (cf. Luke 12:20). Rather, Jesus advises, “Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. In this way, your generosity stores up a reward for you in heaven” (Luke 16:9, NIV). So, beloved, let us never be afraid of giving generously of our time, talent and treasure. Never has it happened that someone went bankrupt because he or she donated to the mission of Christ. For as St Paul declares, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19).