Throughout my ministry as a priest, I have asked people to discern and pray about a ministry for which I believed they had the gifts. I have mentored lay people who initially were led to "on the edge/out of the box ministry," but after months of coaching, they suddenly felt a nudge to answer the call to traditional ordained ministry. I have served as Nominating Committee chair for the diocese and over the years, I invited priests, deacons, and lay people to consider serving in leadership positions and on committees and other groups. In the United States Air Force Auxiliary, I have asked young chaplains to consider taking on positions of leadership. Often when I asked people to pray about responding to God's call for lay or ordained ministry, they had reasons to say no. Fear of change or failure results in excuses like "I'm not really good at that," or "I just don't have time."

A kairos moment is defined as when "certain unexpected circumstances push us to divert, to take a different choice, and to use those opportune moments to understand our true calling." Mary's prodding of Jesus to action during the wedding at Cana was a kairos moment: my own call to ordained ministry was a kairos moment. Nearly 14 years ago, someone saw gifts in me that I could not see in myself. My priest asked me, "Have you ever felt called to ordained ministry?" My response was a lot like Jesus' answer when his mother wanted him to act. I said, "You're kidding, right? It's not the right time for us to go away to seminary for three years, quit my job, live on one income, leave our home, and leave all our friends." I made excuses, tried to get out of it, hoping for the perfect time. I tried to control when I wanted to do ministry, but God would have none of it. He knew that it was the right time for my family to set out on that new journey. Throughout my time of discerning my own ministry call, there were many kairos moments that made it clear to me that I needed to be obedient to God. God opened every door, and made it possible for us to serve, even when my agenda, my calendar, and my excuses would have kept me from responding to God's call.

How about you? Maybe God has been nudging you to begin serving in a new ministry at your parish. Maybe people have told you that you have the gifts for some special kind of service in the church. Maybe you said, "I have so much on my plate," or maybe like Jesus in an unexpected moment, when the need was presented for you to serve, you said, "it's just not the right time." The One who created all we perceive, the One who miraculously changed water into wine is the same One who gives us the gifts for mission, the passion to serve, and the work to do. From our human perspective, there are no perfect times or circumstances to do ministry, but for the One who made us so perfectly, makes possible what Jack Good says are "certain unexpected circumstances to push us to divert, to take a different choice, and to use those opportune moments to understand our true calling."

Later in his ministry, Jesus had many kairos moments. One time Jesus was teaching the crowds, and then he had a moment when something happened unexpectedly. He stopped, saw all his people living daily in poverty, sickness and in need, and with great compassion he said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:37b-38) Some things have never changed. Even in the church of the 21st century, and still today, the work of ministry is beyond the scope of what any one of us alone can do. Yet the Master coaxes us to ask God to send some help. Remember: you are not being asked to change "water into wine," but merely to use the gifts you have been given for service in God's Kingdom. When it does come, please be open to that kairos moment and with confidence in Our Lord Jesus to walk the journey alongside you, respond with "I will, with God's help."

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