

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, January 17, 2016

The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on one or more of the scripture readings for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

ANOTHER EPIPHANY

Jesus was good, holy, bold, strong, courageous, faithful, prayerful, loving, compassionate, and forgiving. All Christians would agree those adjectives accurately describe Jesus. He was all those things and more.

Now what adjectives describe Mary, the mother of Jesus?

We might respond that Mary was obedient, open, loving, caring, serene, devout, pious, religious, virtuous, sympathetic, and motherly. If we look at artistic depictions of Mary we see such traits in her image.

But this Sunday's Gospel (John 2:1-11) reveals that Mary can also be described by adjectives that we may not so readily associate with her. Mary was bold, assertive, confident, and persuasive.

At the Marriage Feast of Cana described in Sunday's Gospel, Mary is the one who confidently takes action when the wine starts to run out. Sensitive to the embarrassing situation in which the newlyweds and their families find themselves, Mary boldly approaches her son and tells him, "They have no wine."

Mary goes to her son not just to inform him of the situation, but to persuade him to do something about it.

When Jesus seemingly puts her off by saying, "My hour has not yet come," she does not let his response dissuade her. Instead, in earshot of her son, she tells the waiters, "Do whatever he tells you."

Mary obviously expected her son Jesus to do something. In fact, we might even say that Mary put Jesus in a position that if he did not act he would make his mother look foolish before the waiters and make himself appear as less than an obedient and respectful son.

In the liturgy of the Church, Jesus' changing water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana is considered an epiphany. It manifests the miraculous power of Jesus. It shows him changing water used for Jewish ritual purification into the wine that hints at a new way of relating to God. It shows him revealing his divine glory and power and so starting his disciples on the road that leads to belief in him.

But Sunday's Gospel is also an epiphany that reveals something about Mary as well. Mary is no shrinking violet, no passive woman, no subservient female hoping that a male will notice the problem. She boldly speaks up and in doing so she sets in motion the first miracle of Jesus found in the Gospel of John.

Mary, who brought Jesus into the world that first Christmas, is the one who puts his ministry into motion in Sunday's Gospel. Mary is obedient and pious but she is also assertive and bold!

© 2016 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski