



The Cathedral of St. Andrew - Honolulu

Sermon: Year C – Second Sunday after Epiphany – January 20, 2019: You are God's Miracle

In this morning's gospel, we have the first public miracle of Jesus, at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, where he takes water and turns it into wine.

His mother tells him that there's a problem, because they've run out of wine and Jesus basically tells her, "Hey, Mom, it's none of our business," and she just sort of shrugs him off and tells the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

They say that a miracle is a surprising and welcome event that isn't explicable by natural or scientific laws, and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency.

Now I don't know about you, but if the dynamic between Jesus and his mother is anything like the dynamic between me and my mother, then the first miracle in this story isn't changing water into wine, but the fact that Jesus actually does what his mother tells him to do!

But all kidding aside, I think there are actually two things going on here – the first is the miracle, and the second is transformation, the transformation of water into wine, transformation meaning *a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance*. There is indeed a dramatic change in the form of that liquid — water into wine.

Thinking of transformation, last week Saturday I witnessed a transformation that touched and moved me very much when for the second time in my life, I made the trek out to the Waianae Coast to attend the ordination to the priesthood of my friend Mark Haworth.

Mark and I talked a lot before he got ordained and one of the things that I told him was that he would go through an ontological change, in other words a change in his being, a change in the DNA of who he actually is.

It was the same for me and when I got ordained. Before my ordination, I practiced and practiced and practiced doing the Eucharistic Prayer, especially right before my ordination so that I would be ready for my first Eucharist in the chapel at Seabury Hall. There's a part in the service called the epiclesis where we take our hands and put them over the bread and the wine, transforming them into the flesh and blood of Jesus – another miracle; again, not explicable by natural or scientific laws and therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency.

I practiced and practiced and practiced and then the day after my ordination, I practiced again but this time when I did the epiclesis, I felt this weight on my hands as if they were being pushed down by force outside myself toward the chalice and the paten where the bread and the wine were. And that also speaks to ontological change, because after my ordination I was a different person, with different gifts than I had before.

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I hope and pray that Mark has similar experiences.

The thing is, we look for these big, grand miracles in our lives and I think we lose sight of the notion that the work of divine agency is constant for us. I don't know about you, but things constantly happen in my life that I know are things that I'm not doing for myself, but where I have the help of the power and a force that is much greater and more expansive than I am.

One thing that comes to mind is when I look at our Cathedral choirs. Many of you may remember, and some of you may not, but when you look at our choir today you have to remember that just a little over two years ago there was one person up there singing while Todd was playing the organ. Now we have sixteen on some Sundays. That's the work of divine agency. It's a miracle.

Another thing that comes to mind is when you look at our Cathedral finances. A couple of years ago we were financially strapped, and today if you look at our books, we have a very respectable amount of money in the bank to fund capital and operating reserves. Again, that's the work of divine agency. It's a miracle.

But the biggest one, for me, that I can think of is that when I was in Hilo, I came back here for the weekend to help with the wedding of Paul and Kilani. I'd been in Hilo for three years after having been here for three years as your Canon Pastor and I believed that I'd moved on because my time here was done. But when I stood behind that altar to start the Eucharistic Prayer, I raised my hands to say, "The Lord be with you," and I literally heard a voice say to me, "You're coming back." And here I am. It was the work of divine agency. It's a miracle.

You know, I talk a lot about feeling the presence of God in my weekly letters to you and in my sermons from this pulpit.

And I think I stress it so much, because it's a key component into noticing the miracles in our lives and not taking them for granted, because God is in everything good that we are and everything good that we do and everything good that happens to and for us.

From our transformations from divine energy into human form, to being baptized people of God, to growing from children into adults, to falling in love and blending our flesh into one, to the births of our children and then our grandchildren and great grandchildren, and then again that wonderful transformation from human form back into divine energy at the time of our death, God is present and an agent in all the good that happens to us on this earthly plain, and also from whence we came and to whence we will go back one day.

The wedding in Cana of Galilee and the changing of water into wine is simply a reminder that miracles are there for us all the time and that God is present in our lives and in our midst all the time.

And so maybe this story calls us to reflect on that and to think of all the good things that happen in our lives that we haven't done for ourselves but are there as the result of divine agency; and then to engage in the miracle of gratitude for all that we receive and for all that we are able to do not only for ourselves, but also for God's people, for God's church, and for the God we worship and love.

And then a wonderful miracle happens – the realization that we are agents of the divine and that we ourselves are a miracle that we can offer to God as God's agents who can and will work with the

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divine to make this world a world of love, a world of joy, a world of compassion, a world of kindness, and a world of peace.

A miracle is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency.

You are that miracle. And for the gift to me that is all of you, I boldly proclaim, “Thanks be to God.”

You are my miracle.

Amen.