



## Second Sunday after Epiphany (C)

John 2: 1-11

January 17, 2010

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+O God, you reveal yourself in various ways through our sisters and brothers. Open our minds and hearts so that we may know you, our Strength and Redeemer. Amen.

This was reported on Thursday morning this past week: "Information continues to develop, but what we already know staggers the imagination. Both the Haitian prime minister and the consul general to the U.N. have said that as many as 100,000 people are likely to have died. (We now know that that estimate will greatly increase.) The International Red Cross estimates that one-third of Haitians -- about 3 million people -- were affected by the earthquake." The Episcopal Relief and Development organization which has an on-going presence in Haiti has been working tirelessly throughout this past week since the earthquake hit one of the poorest countries in the world.

"Tragic moments like these bring out the best in us as global citizens. We put aside our differences and unite in support of the victims and their families. Haiti is no stranger to hardship, poverty or sorrow... I pray that this is not simply another tragic event we see on TV as we channel surf, but I hope it reminds us of our brothers and sisters around the world and down the street, who suffer not only from tragic events -- but who suffer every day.

"I also want to say a word about God and evil... My God does not cause evil. God is not a vengeful and retributive being...instead, God is in the very midst of this tragedy, suffering with those who are suffering. When evil strikes, it's easy to ask, where is God? The answer is that God is suffering with those who are suffering." ("Sojourners" [SojoMail@sojo.net](mailto:SojoMail@sojo.net))

Many, if not most of us, have been deeply saddened by the reports we've seen or heard through the internet, TV or newspapers over the past several days, as we have been attentive to an event of catastrophic proportions. I had planned on preaching about the abundance of God in this wonderful Gospel passage: Jesus turning ordinary water, lots of ordinary water, gathered for purification rituals for a wedding in Cana, and miraculously turning that water into fine wine.

As a biblical preacher and that's how I see myself, I can't just skip over this Gospel passage even in the midst of the life-altering event that turned lives upside down for our sisters and brothers in Haiti. I can't just say, "Today, maybe God needs me to only talk about Haiti, or poverty, or human suffering." Rather, maybe God wants us to try and make some sense out of the Haitian plight against the backdrop of a Gospel passage of hospitality and abundance.

You and I live in a complex world. We gather here week after week because we have a need to be together in this complex world. We gather to be together so that we can somehow face the complexities of our relationships, our work, our nation and our world.

We gather because Christ has called us into a relationship. It is a relationship that is abundant in so many ways. God's grace is showered upon each one of us and those trapped in rubble, those in the streets or in clinics and

hospitals in Haiti. The same God that we love and worship in this place is the same God who is weeping in that rubble, those streets, those clinics and hospitals, and in make-shift morgues in Haiti.

Jesus found that there was a need at a wedding in Cana to which he, his mother and disciples were invited. The wine was running out. Even for those of us who have given simple dinner parties, we make sure that if we're going to serve wine or any other beverage that we have plenty of it. Most of us know that anxiety of running out of something when we have guests whether it's wine, soda, water, or whatever. As hospitable people, we want our guests to be well tended when they are in our homes just as we want our visitors here to be well tended when they come to worship with us either in person or via TV.

So, imagine Mary coming to her son, Jesus, and saying, you have to do something. This will be embarrassing in the extreme. Do something! And Jesus does do something

Jesus changed ordinary water set aside for purification rituals into the best of wines. He did it without really saying anything special. Ordinary water was transformed into the finest of wines. The huge stone jars filled with far more water than was probably needed were miraculously filled with more wine than could probably have been consumed.

When we talk about biblical miracles, we usually talk about what they are a sign of or what greater reality they point to. Most of us believe that miracles do happen. Miracles don't have to be big. As Christians, we believe that miracles do happen, be they small or seemingly insignificant.

The other night, Anderson Cooper reported on a child who had been pulled from the rubble in Port-au-Prince and who had miraculously survived. He said it was a small sign of hope in the midst of so much suffering.

What is the message for us this week when we look at the event in Haiti, when we look closely at this Gospel passage about God's responsiveness to need and when we look at our own lives in relationship to God? Where are you and I today in our life with God? How do we see ourselves in our need *for* God and in our need for healing and wholeness, our need to be filled to the brim with grace, like the fine wine filled the stone jars in Cana?

We claim ourselves as God's people. Last week, we reaffirmed our Baptismal Covenant, our promises to *be* God's people no matter what our world looks like. Sometimes, we see a world of beauty and grace and other times, we are faced with realities of tragedy, pain and suffering. In whatever aspect of life we find ourselves, God is there, truly present and truly authentic through the Holy Spirit.

God is and will always be with us. God *is* with the people of Haiti and is present to them through our care, prayers and donations.

Through whatever happens to us in life, the God of Isaiah, of Paul and of Jesus is *our* God. Let us be joyful in the knowledge that God is with us and loves us without reserve. Let us show forth that joy in our lives today and every day and be grateful. Amen!