



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 16 January 2022

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

The Gospel of today's liturgy recounts the episode of the wedding at Cana, where Jesus transformed water into wine for the joy of the newlyweds. And the Gospel ends: "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him" (*Jn 2:11*). We notice that the evangelist John does not speak of a miracle, that is, of a powerful and extraordinary deed that causes wonder. He writes that a *sign* took place at Cana, that sparked the faith of his disciples. We can, then, ask ourselves: What is a "sign" according to the Gospel?

A sign is a clue that reveals God's love, that does not call attention to the power of the action, but to the love that caused it. It teaches us something about God's love that is always near, tender and compassionate. The first sign took place when a couple faced a difficulty on the most important day of their lives. Right in the middle of the feast, an essential element was missing, the wine, and their joy ran the risk of being dampened among the criticism and dissatisfaction of the guests. Just imagine how a wedding feast could continue only with water!. It is terrible! What a bad impression the newlyweds would make.

It is Our Lady who became aware of the problem and discretely brought it to Jesus' attention. And

he intervened without fanfare, almost without being noticed. Everything took place with discretion, everything took place “behind the scenes” — Jesus told the servants to fill the jars with water, which became wine. This is how God acts: with closeness and with discretion. Jesus’ disciples understood this: they saw that, thanks to him, the wedding banquet became even more beautiful. And they also saw the way Jesus acted — the way he served in hiddenness. This is how Jesus is — he helps us, he serves us in hiddenness, in that moment, so much so that it was the bridegroom who was complimented for the good wine. No one noticed, only the servants. This is how the seed of faith began to develop within them — that is, they believed that God, God’s love, was present in Jesus.

It is beautiful to think that the first sign Jesus accomplished was not an extraordinary healing or a miracle in the temple of Jerusalem, but a gesture that responded to a simple and concrete need of common people, a domestic gesture. Let us put it this way — a miracle done on “tip toes”, discretely, silently. He is ready to help us, to lift us up again. And then, if we are attentive to these “signs”, we will be conquered by his love and we will become his disciples.

But there is another distinctive characteristic about the sign at Cana. Generally, the wine provided at the end of the feast was the one that was less good — this is still done today. At that point, people do not distinguish as well whether it is good wine or wine that has been watered down a little. Jesus, instead, makes sure that the feast ends with *the best wine*. Symbolically, this tells us that God wants what is better for us, he wants us to be happy. He does not set limits and he does not ask us for interest. There is no place for ulterior motives or demands placed on the newlyweds, in Jesus’ sign. No, the joy Jesus brought to their hearts was complete and disinterested joy. It was not “watered down joy”!

I suggest an exercise that can be very good for us. Today, let us try to rummage through our memories, looking for *signs* that the Lord accomplished in my life. Let each of us say: what are the signs the Lord accomplished in my life? What are the hints of his presence, the signs that he did to show us that he loves us? Let us think about that difficult moment in which God let me experience his love... And let us ask ourselves: with which discrete and loving signs did he let me feel his tenderness? When did I feel the Lord nearer? When did I feel his tenderness and his compassion? Every one of us has these moments in our personal history. Let us go in search of these signs, let us remember them. How did I discover his closeness? How did great joy remain in my heart? Let us relive the moments in which we experienced his presence and Mary’s intercession. May she, the Mother who is always attentive as at Cana, help us treasure the signs of God’s presence in our lives.

After the Angelus, the Pope continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I express my closeness to the people hit by strong rain and flooding in various regions of Brazil during these past weeks. I am especially praying for the victims and their families, and for those who have lost their homes. May God sustain the efforts of those who are providing relief.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place from 18 to 25 January. This year's proposal aims to mirror the experience of the Magi who came from the East to Bethlehem to honour the Messianic King. We Christians, in the diversity of our confessions and traditions, are also pilgrims on the way toward full unity, and we draw closer to our goal the more we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, our only Lord. During the Week of Prayer, let us offer our struggles and our suffering for the unity of Christians.

I greet all of you, people from Rome and pilgrims from various countries. I extend a special greeting to the *Girasoli della Locride* group from Locri, along with their families and leaders.

I wish all of you a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.
Arrivederci!