

GRACE CHURCH  
EPIPHANY 2 - C (RCL)

Honesdale, PA  
19-20 January 2019

Isaiah 62: 1-5  
Psalm 36: 5-10  
I Corinthians 12: 1-11  
John 2: 1-11

*HERE IT IS: TAKE CARE OF IT, JESUS!*

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This week, I've been reading one of Dorothy Sayers' books.  
Sayers, who is most famous for the Lord Peter Wimsey mysteries  
was also a famous British theologian  
and a member of the "Inklings" a group of British writers  
that included Tolkien and C.S. Lewis.  
Sayers reminds us over and over that Jesus is not the milque-toast nice guy  
we have made him over the centuries.  
Nor was Mary the sweet, demure, young woman we have made her.  
No, they were real human beings, with lots of family dynamics going on.  
That's the problem we have only hearing the Scripture snippets  
at Church on Saturday evenings or Sunday mornings.  
We need to dig into the drama of personalities - real human people -  
just like us.  
To quote an old song,  
"What if God were one of us - just a slob like one of us?"

In the very beginning of John's Gospel,  
after all that high-falootin' philosophical stuff in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter  
about Jesus being some kind of Light to the World,  
we get down to the nitty-gritty in John's second chapter:  
Mum and Boy  
and humanity in real time.

Debbie Blue, a Lutheran pastor gives a mother's perspective:  
"This is the first glimpse we have of Jesus' mother in the Book of John. She isn't a  
naive young mother gazing adoringly into the eyes of her sweet infant. She's more like  
an irritable menopausal Jewish lady kvetching to her unmarried, unemployed son."

But, you say, all Mary's doing is making a comment,  
"They've run out of wine."  
Maybe she grabs her purse, puts it in the crook of her elbow,  
attaching her hat and remarks that it's time to go home.  
Why is this lazy bum of a son, 29 years old, and still living at home,  
running around the country with his buddies,  
who do nothing but go fishing.  
"Get off your backside and do something, Boy."

Let me digress a bit and ponder,  
    now whose wedding was this anyway?  
All of Jesus' disciples were present,  
    we know Peter was married for in Mark's Gospel telling,  
        Jesus' first miracle was healing Peter's mother-in-law.  
Was this Peter's wedding feast?  
Hmm. Could be.

Pastor Debbie then properly makes us look at Jesus:

    "Every commentary I've read," she writes, "insists that Jesus' reply to her is not impatient or disrespectful; apparently it was common to say to one's mother, 'Woman, what have you to do with me?' Still as a mother I want to ring his neck..."

*The Christian Century, Jan.12, 2010, p.18*

Even as a male parent, I have to agree with her,  
    "What do you mean, 'What have I to do with you?'  
        How 'bout starting with giving you birth!"  
Then Mary turns around, ignoring the ingrate son,  
    and tells the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."  
Oh, well, now; let's up the ante:  
    let's publicly humiliate Jesus in front of the wait staff!  
Assertive behavior; public Aggression.  
And Jesus follows with Passive-Aggressive Behavior.  
"Fine! Whatever."  
Sounds just like your family, doesn't it!

There's a lot of family dynamics in the Gospel,  
    just look at all the parables Jesus tells about two brothers:  
    could they be family tales about Jesus and baby brother James?  
Like the Father who comes to the first son and says,  
    "Go out to the fields today."  
And the boy says, "OK," but sits around playing Nintendo all day.  
Then the Father goes to the other son and says,  
    "Go out to the fields today."  
And the boy says, "No way!" but then he changes his mind and goes.  
The question Jesus asks is,  
    "Which one of these did the Will of the Father?"  
And of course the answer is the second one who actually went out to work.  
It's seems we have a bit of that right here in today's story.  
Jesus gives in,  
    and does his mother's will -  
        to over-flowing.  
Even when he initially said, "No."  
There's no major show.  
No public display.  
Only those same servants who Mary brought into the picture knew.  
The steward didn't know.

The groom didn't know.  
Just the servants.  
Well, and Mary.  
And the Mother smiles quietly, pondering all this in her heart.

You can see the earthly picture here, can't you.  
The Bible is so real.  
But what makes it more than a novel of human dynamics  
and miracle stories  
is what happens through the real lives of the Biblical characters -  
how Jesus transforms ordinary life - our life - into something miraculous.  
Jesus takes empty vessels,  
sometimes the empty vessels of our lives  
and has them filled with plain and ordinary water.

Then he takes that common source of life, the necessary,  
the plain and simple,  
and makes something joyous out of it.  
Just one chapter earlier, in his Prelude to the Gospel  
John tells us that Christ was at the beginning,  
Christ is the beginning to John, the beginning and the ending,  
the Alpha and the Omega,  
and just as the waters of creation bring forth something new,  
so does this water of life bring forth something new,  
120 or up to 180 gallons of the finest wine.

Throughout the Bible, the image of new and good wine  
symbolizes the rich life of being in God's grace,  
being called and responding to the love which God lays before us.

On this Women's March weekend around the world,  
we can honor a woman, our Mother Mary, who stands her ground,  
making sure the good, the right, the gracious thing is done.

But notice, Mary doesn't tell Jesus what to do, nor should we.  
She only noted the obvious to him,  
and then expected, waited, allowed him to do what he would.

I really do think she got up, took her purse  
decided it was late and she had had a long day.  
The young people can keep up the wild dancing with loud music.

Here's the situation, Jesus.  
Take care of it.  
I'm going home.

*[exit pulpit]*