Second Sunday after Epiphany All Saints’ Church

January 20, 2019 Year C

Isaiah 62:1-5 I Corinthians 12:1-11

Psalm 36:5-10 John 2:1-11

In this morning’s gospel, we see Jesus’s first miracle, very first.

Persistent Mother meets Divine Reluctance in the no name town of Cana, ten miles north of Nazareth.

John is making a point in this place that could be anywhere at any time. Jesus’ first miracle is about Joy: Yes, to gladness, celebration and rejoicing. Yes, to life, all of life, as religious, not just some set apart holy corner of moral certitude or committed piety. All life is religious, because all life is sacred, from acts of glory to acts that are simply mundane. And it can happen anywhere, anytime.

Yes, to life and joy, mercy and peace, grace and goodness. Yes, to hospitality.

Jesus swings into action- (finally after looking like a bit of a party pooper). I guess it was his time after all, and he turns water into wine and the party continues: the community of faith is to be a celebration.

Jesus’ first miracle is enabling people to celebrate. They can’t help themselves. Joy and excitement are spilling out.

I felt this positive energy when I was at Exeter on Friday celebrating Martin Luther King Day. Lots of activities and speakers (both adults and teenagers) addressing the concerns of Generation Z or affectionately called Gen Z. Gen Z are the children born between the mid 1990’s till about 2010; they are the generation beyond the Millennials.

They are the true Digital Natives. More optimistic than the Millennials, they are also entrepreneurial, practical, independent and problem solvers. College might be the path to advancing themselves, but not to the point of being saddled with overwhelming debt. They will take responsibility for making careers in all the new budding opportunities in science, health, business and research.

They don’t want to be pampered, only respected. They have economic power. Though their connections through their phones are second nature, they want face-to-face interactions and to be strengthened by relationships. Real faces in real time. The believe in advocacy, voting, intersectionality, fluidity and making a difference.

We saw an example of this kind of energy around the Parkland shooting in Florida. Those students rose up, organized, and took on the adults and showed them the power of mobilizing. They really believe they will find a solution to gun violence.

I liked hanging out with the students on Friday. While hanging with them, I heard a story about a library that is literally on the border of Canada and America. Literally. The back room and parking lot are in Canada; the front door to the library is in America. No big deal… except it has become one.

There are many students, mostly graduate students, who have come to study in America with single entry visas. A single-entry visa means if you leave America to travel internationally, like to go home to visit your family, you may not be given permission to come back into the country. Before this administration’s travel ban, visas could be easily renewed. But not now. So, students, especially from Iran and Libya, are not risking going home. Families are separated.

But there is a solution. Canada has no ban and so families are flying to Canada, renting a car and traveling to this library. Students are entering the library from the US side and then spending the day with their families.

The border patrol agents are aware, and yet they are looking the other way. There is a sign in the library: No food, no drinks, no family reunions. Whatever. Families are finding a way to love and support each other and to beat the system.

Isaiah reminds us that God ***names us*** as all belonging to God. All of us. God can’t keep silent. If your name was Forsaken or Desolate, you are now Married to the Lord. Your name is “My Delight is in Her. My Delight is in Him. My Delight is in You.

This new generation coming into power are hopeful. Connected and empowered. They believe in a justice that includes all. They’re waiting their turn, and while they wait, they are embracing Paul’s amazing vision of needing each other (what they call intersectionality) to find a way to life and love and joy. They believe there can be no peace without justice and they are going to put their bodies on the line.

And even in the midst of fear and worries and anxiety, death and doom, they believe in a Joy that can be found as we rely on each other and find our way. AMEN