

Epiphany 2C
St James and Good Shepherd, Laconia, NH
The Rev. Dr. Janet Lombardo
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Transformation (Insta-Pot)

Tomorrow is a holiday to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Tomorrow is also the inauguration of a president, a peaceful transfer of power that we should never take for granted. Some of you might be eagerly awaiting the new administration, to see some changes; others might be fearful of those changes; and everywhere in between. I would say that there won't be as many changes as some might want – for better or worse, the federal bureaucracy tends to move very slowly. It seems unlikely that anything will happen quickly, but I really don't know. I do know that we are strong, that we are resilient, and that we are people of hope. We are people of faith, and we trust in God to make all things new and to continually move us more and more towards God's kingdom. We will have ups and downs, but I do believe that, in the end, we will persevere.

Our gospel reading this morning is about perseverance. It is about miracles, it is about transformation, and it is about hope. Perseverance, in that Mary nudges, or even pushes Jesus to action. At first, he tells her 'No', but she ignores that response and tells the staff to do whatever he says.

As a Mother, I can remember pushing my children to do new things, to try new experiences. Maybe Mary sees more than Jesus knows. Either way, Jesus does what his mother tells him to do. Jesus changes water into wine – not just any wine but great wine, and not just a couple of bottles but a vast amount. It's almost a frivolous miracle – after all it's only wine for a party, hardly a life changing event. Yet here we are, still telling the story.

I think that this story is surprising in many ways – surprising that Mary asks Jesus to do this, surprising that Jesus actually does it, and surprising that God chose this event to mark the start of Jesus' ministry. An almost frivolous event really, but one showing God's power and abundance. After all, water into wine is not an easy trick, wine usually takes years to make, but here we are told that this wine is

made in an instant. An Insta-Pot for wine! This wine transformed the party, but I think more importantly, it set up Jesus' ministry and the beginning of a transformation for his disciples. The last line of the reading states that 'the disciples believed'. The disciples believed in Jesus.

So, transformation is key here. Jesus is nudged by his mother into transformation, water is transformed into wine, and the disciples are transformed into believers. It is a surprising shift to an otherwise ordinary party, but it is literally miraculous.

I think that a powerful aspect of this story is that God does all these things almost instantly, that all of these shifts happen in a very short period of time. Also, it is not just a story, it is a miraculous demonstration of God's generosity and abundance, and it marks the beginning of a new way to be.

Martin Luther King Jr. offered us a new vision that shifted the course of history and of our understanding. God continually offers us the opportunity for transformation, for shifts in our perspective and our understanding.

Where is God nudging you to shift? Where is God seeking your transformation? The power of the Spirit is miraculous, the power of transformation is amazing. We all have areas where we can grow, where our perspective needs changing. God calls each of us to transformation, each and every day. Some may be large shifts, others may be small steps, but leading to big changes. We can't always get the Insta-Pot version, more than likely the change will take time. God is generous in showing us the way, God gifts us with everything we need to make the change, but it is up to us to take the first step. It is up to us to accept God's calling to us, to let the Spirit work in our lives in new and amazing ways.

Let us be the people of hope and not fear. Let us nudge each other as Mary nudged Jesus. Let us believe like the disciples, so that our lives and the world may be changed. Let us be the really good wine, nurturing and healing this broken and divided world, living into God's calling to us.

Where is the Spirit nudging you? Do you dare to follow? For only then will you be transformed.

Amen