

The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 20, 2019

“My hour has not yet come.” (John 2:4)

Which is more praiseworthy: an action performed or the decision to perform the action? Last weekend we listened and reflected as Jesus, emerging from many “hidden” years of which we can only speculate upon, arrived at the waters of the Jordan River to be baptized by Saint John beginning the first steps of His public ministry which would ultimately culminate in His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Today, we heard the news of His first recorded miracle - the changing of water into wine. Therefore, my initial question may seem a tad bit odd at the moment. Before we attempt an answer, allow me to share an insight which formed in my mind after reading a section from the great work: *Transformation in Christ* by Dietrich von Hildebrand. Through my reading of this spiritual masterpiece, I will attempt to answer this question by speaking of an unrecorded moment, a miracle if you will, which had to happen in Jesus’ life leading Him to be Baptized, then to perform the very public miracle of the water into wine, and finally to conclude with His ultimate sacrifice upon the wood of the cross.

“The gift of free decision — the capacity of freely choosing one’s position, commonly called freedom of will — is one of the deepest and most characteristic marks of the person.” (Transformation in Christ p. 213) All life is affected by the rhythm of nature, the changing of the seasons. However, only man has the ability to reflect upon his situation and place within this ever changing environment. Mankind has witnessed and experienced great works of art, literature, philosophy, inventions, etc. which developed within the mind of a person. These various accomplishments have allowed man to interact within his surroundings in unique and varied ways. All of these developments, for better or worse, had to begin with an idea first proposed within the mind of a single individual. God had to infuse this great gift, this cognitive ability, into mankind if we were to be truly free to assent to His request to join Him in the eternal bliss we call heaven. Jesus, like us in every way (except sin), also had to possess this ability. He had to reflect upon and pray about His decision to emerge from His “hidden” life. He had to choose to make His Presence known to mankind.

I am very much aware that this aspect of the life of Jesus is not spoken upon. Many would assume, since He is God’s eternally only begotten Son, He would necessarily perform His Father’s Will without a “second thought”. This notion, I agree, is undoubtedly true. However, should we nevertheless neglect or fail to consider His “first thought”? Jesus had to freely choose to reveal Himself. He had to choose to accept His role in God’s salvific plan and the consequences which would result from His choice. In this way, Jesus is no different from you or I. Likewise, as Jesus was striving toward His free acceptance to perform His Father’s Will, He would have to overcome the doubts that each of us must squarely face as we too make our own decisions. Would He have encountered moments of self-doubt or fear which could have potentially hindered His full acceptance to live out this mission? Yes, I believe He would have not only faced His fears, He would have fully accepted them knowing they had to be understood and conquered. Again, He is completely like you and I except for sin. Jesus’ greatest and most praiseworthy untold moment is that moment when, casting all fear and doubt aside, He chose to

give Himself unreservedly to His Father's Will and save all mankind from the grip of sin, death, and Satan.

There is one thing more that I would like to point out which would have helped Him come to His ultimate conclusion. It would have been the virtuous examples of not only His parents, Joseph and Mary, but of other unnamed men and women whose lives helped to mold His own. We should never forget the influence that a good and honorable life lived can have upon those around us. As we seek to encourage those we love through the moral choices we make, so too did those around the boy, the young man, and finally the adult man Jesus. Jesus is our Savior not simply for dying upon a cross, rather for His freely choosing to give Himself totally by His life and His death for you and I. We are truly highly blessed "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life*" (John 3:16) and His Son said "Yes" to that ultimate calling and sacrifice.