

I come in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

There is no time like the present. We must wait for just the right time. A good joke is all in its timing. Just in time supply chain. Timing is everything. It's about time.

It seems like there is something lost if “the something” comes too soon, or comes too late. It is as if there is a ‘sweet spot’ in the chronology of time for certain things. It's sort of like the Paul Mason commercial when Orson Welles says they will “Sell no wine before its time.” Sell it too early, it may not have the fullness of flavor. Sell it too late (especially for the white wines), it may begin to sour – missing the moment when it's at its best.

In our Gospel today, we hear about the Wedding at Cana. Weddings traditionally lasted days. And in this case, when partying was in full swing, they run out of wine. Jesus, arrives **just in time** to address the situation, avoiding a social disaster. All of this drama over wine. Seems trivial.

If we scratch away at this, Jesus came into the world in the ‘fullness of time.’ It was a critical time in history. In God's time, He called for a renewed Covenant with His people. All of the prophets of the past were the ‘best wine’ that humanity could offer, but their message was lost. But this time, a new wine, Jesus, God's best, beyond humanity, initiated His ministry at just the right time.

Even Jesus seemed to balk at it when he said, “My time has not yet come.”

But, in the end, Jesus trusted in God’s providence.

I have come to learn that God’s time and my time seldom line up. We obviously don’t use the same watch, or even the same calendar. I want God to act in my time, and I have expectations as to how it should turn out. What I find out is that God will do something in His time, and will determine the path and direction. It’s always harder than I expect, longer than I expect, goes in a path I don’t want to take, but reveals His glory in ways I would have never imagined. It’s hard work, could be painful, and takes trust.

I have to trust that God, being God, knows what is best for us. After all, God IS God. The fact that God is the creator of all that is, and all that will ever will be, suggests that He has a better handle on reality than I do. I wonder if God’s time comes when we finally get desperate enough to trust Him. As long as we keep thinking we know better, God lets us find out that we don’t. God does not promise that in His time, it will be easy.

In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, he tells them that everyone has been granted gifts of the Holy Spirit. But it must be recognized that it is up to the Holy Spirit who gets what, how much, and when! These gifts are given and activated at the will of the Holy Spirit in God’s time.

Today is a good day to remember God’s time. The time to which I’m referring, was a time of desperation. Walking through a town in the early 1960s, it would not have been uncommon to see “For Coloreds Only” signs, or “White Only”, or how about “Colored Waiting Room”. Protesters would carry signs that said, “Race Mixing is Communist”, or “Fire N-word Workers”, or how about “Segregation is God’s Plan.”

Public transportation, lunch counters, schools, and other public places would make it clear that people with a different skin tone were not worthy of the privileges extended to those with European white skin tones. Systems were put in place to exclude minorities. Employment and educational opportunities were limited for those who looked different, forcing them into poverty. Redlining created clear barriers between ‘good and bad’ neighborhoods.

This was not new. The Atlanta Race Riots of 1906, the Chicago Race Riots of 1919, and the Tulsa Race Riots of 1921 were just a few of the cries for change. Rosa Parks held fast to change in 1955 when she refused to obey segregation laws on public transportation. Racial violence, lynching, law enforcement and vigilante brutality were commonplace. This is racism. Civil law, culture, supremacy groups like the KKK, and even religious institutions supported and fought to retain racism.

Even after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, “Jim Crow” laws ensured that equality was not to be attained. Even today, we find ourselves immersed in systemic racism.

In God’s time, He called on a prophetic figure to remind the world that all human life is created in His image, and is worthy of love and dignity. God would shake up the social norms, cultures, and perceptions by giving the world a voice for the oppressed, the excluded, the undesirable. Hearts would be penetrated, and assumptions and perceptions challenged. A dream would be born.

Today, we recall the work of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Dr King’s voice was added to those like Jesus and Mahatma Gandhi, who preached and promoted change through non-violence and changes of heart. He was a voice for justice and equality.

And, like his predecessors, his message was radical! Radical or not, Dr. King’s voice was heard. On July 2, 1964, after ferocious Congressional battles, the Civil Rights Act was enacted, adding a glimmer of hope to King’s dream. But even this legislation could not cure the social illness of racism. It changed law, but did not change hearts. Yet, King kept pushing forward. But, on April 4, 1968, Dr. King’s voice was silenced. Today, racism remains entrenched in our world. His dream has not fully become reality.

Yet, even in silence, his voice is still heard. In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, it is only fitting that we remember his dream, and work towards change, to seek justice, and to ensure that everyone is worthy of love and dignity. The time is right. The time has come. The time is now. Let us recall together these words from Dr. King’s “I have a Dream” speech:

“Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline.”

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day, states sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Amen.