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Francis, the comic strip
People in St. Peter's Square attend Pope Francis' recitation of the Angelus from the window of

People in St. Peter's Square attend Pope Francis' recitation of the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking the square at the Vatican Jan. 16, 2022. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

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God likes to intervene behind the scenes and without fanfare, always ready to help and lift people up, Pope Francis said.

“And then, if we are attentive to these 'signs,' we will be conquered by his love, and we will become his disciples,” he said to visitors gathered in St. Peter's Square Jan. 16 for his Sunday Angelus address.

The pope reflected on the day's Gospel reading (Jn 2:1-11) of the wedding at Cana and how the first of Jesus' signs was transforming water into wine.

In the Gospel, a “sign” is “a clue that reveals God's love, that does not call attention to the power of the action, but to the love that caused it,” the pope said. “It teaches us something about God's love that is always near, tender and compassionate.”

Jesus' first sign was in the middle of a wedding feast, when a couple faced a huge problem on the most important day of their lives when they ran out of wine.

Aware of the problem, Mary discreetly brought it to Jesus' attention, and “he intervened without fanfare, almost without making it obvious. Everything took place reservedly, everything took place 'behind the scenes,'“ when Jesus told the servants to fill the jars with water and then it became wine, the pope said. “This is how God acts, near to us and discreetly.”

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“How beautiful it is to think that the first sign Jesus accomplished was not an extraordinary healing or something prodigious in the temple of Jerusalem, but an action that responded to a simple and concrete need of common people, a domestic gesture,” Pope Francis said.

Jesus' disciples also saw the way Jesus acted, and “this is how the seed of faith began to develop within them — that is, they believed that God, God's love, was present in Jesus,” he said.

“If we are attentive to these 'signs,' we will be conquered by his love and we will become his disciples,” as well, the pope said.

Jesus is always ready “to help us, to lift us up,” he said. “God wants what is better for us, he wants us to be happy” without any ulterior motives and without placing demands on those he helps.

It would do people good, the pope said, to look back at all the ways God has intervened in discreet, silent ways in their lives.

Let everyone ask, “What are the signs the Lord has accomplished? What are the hints of his presence, the signs he has done to show that he loves us? Let us think about that difficult moment in which God allowed me to experience his love,” tenderness, compassion and closeness, he said.

“Let us relive the moments in which we have experienced his presence and Mary's intercession,” he said, praying that everyone would “treasure the signs of God's presence in our lives.”