

...the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit...

1996: The Fiesta Bowl, National Championship Game:

Nebraska versus Florida!

Ron Skoumal and I were there, seated in the Bidwill family sky box.

The Huskers demolished the Gators thanks to QB Tommie Frasier, and to a running back named Lawrence Phillips.

This week the same Lawrence Phillips was found dead in his California jail cell, awaiting trial for murder.

It culminated a life that began as a fatherless street kid in California and ended in a free fall of anger and violence.

That night in the Fiesta Bowl, his stardom glittered, only to be eclipsed by "demons he could not control."

The Nebraska coaches took heat for even playing him at all, but they deserve praise—most of all for not abandoning him after his life careened into free fall. And In the long run I think they should take credit for giving him a second chance.

"the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit..."

In one shining hour in the Fiesta Bowl, Lawrence Phillips manifested that Spirit in a dazzlingly way.

Then his life went into free fall.

Yet several of the Nebraska coaches kept communicating with him in his darkest jail house days.

That illustrates the mercy that Pope Francis enjoins on all of us.

THE MIRACLE AT CANA:

JN. 2:1-14

It did not end at Cana!

The challenge for every married couple is to continue to change water into wine!

...the tepid water of the daily grind into the sparkling wine of contentment,

...the roiling waters of disagreements and conflict into the wine of forgiveness,

...the rancid water of setbacks into progress,

...the muddy water of loss into the wine of gain,

...the sour water of mourning into joyful wine,

**...the flacid water of aging and impatience into the wine of bearing one another's burdens
and the pleasing wine of patience.**

And so we pray:

O Jesus you came to Cana

to save a young couple from embarrassment.

Come to all struggling couples:

Let them drink anew from those first flasks,

poured years before

in the exhuberance of courtship love.

Revive them with the best of wines:

Your support and your encouragement.

Bless them

as you blest the couple at Cana.

Amen