

“Wedding at Cana”

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle C)

Is 6:21-5; Ps 96:1-3, 7-10; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Jn 2:1-11

There’s something undeniably special about weddings

- a man & a woman, often in their physical prime
 - so handsome and beautiful
- giving their lives to each other, vowing their love & devotion
 - in front of family, friends, and God almighty
- On many levels, weddings are truly an occasion to celebrate
 - and so we often spare no expense as we do so
 - from the dresses to the reception venue
 - the food, the drinks, the music & dancing
- Bottom line: weddings are among the most festive & joyous times of our entire lives!

Throughout the Bible there are many references

- to weddings and their festive banquets
- Beginning w Gen 2 – institution of marriage btwn man & woman
- Thru the end w Rev 19 – Marriage Supper of the Lamb
- many other places in between, to include
- The “Wedding at Cana” we just read from the Gospel of John
- 1st reading from prophet Isaiah: *“as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you...”*

God in Scripture uses weddings, banquets, brides & bridegrooms metaphorically

- in an attempt to describe the indescribable -- to help us grasp
 - the kind of spiritual intimacy God desires to have with us
 - This imagery points to the communion we share
 - at Christ’s banquet of the Holy Eucharist in the Mass
 - and also points to the future
 - to the ultimate communion of God & man in heaven
 - but it also points to our daily lives in the here & now

- God wants us to understand the majestic beauty and joy of
 - Jesus Christ and his bride the Church
 - of man living in perfect communion with God

So how fitting it is that Jesus would choose a wedding

- as the place He would perform His first public miracle
 - (or “sign” as John calls them)
- This marriage feast in Cana is rich in symbology...
 - Much we could discuss, but want to focus today on 3 aspects:
 - the role of our Blessed Mother
 - the “hour” of Christ
 - the Cooperation of Man

1. Rather than call Mary by name,

John refers to her as the “Mother of Jesus”

- He does this only twice: today and again at Calvary (Jn 19:25)
 - Presenting Mary at both the beginning and end of Jesus’ public life
 - indicating her special role in Jesus’ work.
 - That role is revealed today when the wedding party
 - “ran short of wine”
- So Mary came to Jesus saying: “They have no wine.”
- Then she & Jesus have an interesting exchange:
 - Jesus responds, “*Woman, how does your concern affect me?*”
 - and then He goes on to change water into wine.
 - Just a quick side note on Jesus referring to his mother as “Woman”
 - a reference He uses again from the cross
 - It’s by no means disrespectful, in fact quite the opposite
 - equivalent to modern day use of “Lady” or “Ma’am”
 - Jesus showed great respect for His Mother
 - At any rate: “They have no wine.”
 - “How does this concern me?”
 - Jesus changes water into wine.

- Some might think this implies Mary actually
 - got Jesus to *change his mind*...
 - but Jesus is God – and God does not “change His mind...”
- However, what we can say is
 - that Mary’s intercession was obviously a detail important enough that John would record in his Gospel:
 - Jesus certainly did not need His mother to play a role here
 - as God incarnate, he would already have known
 - they were out of wine...
 - Yet, Jesus clearly embraced this intercessory role of the Blessed Mother
 - which shows us the impact of her intercession in our prayers

2. Also in his response to Mary’s intercession, Jesus said

“My hour has not yet come.” (Jn 2:4)

This is a very curious response to his Mother’s mention

- that they had run out of wine...

So what does Jesus mean by his “hour”?

John actually makes reference to this “hour” of Christ

- no less than 17 times in his Gospel
 - (Jn 7, 8) Jesus was knee-deep in clashes with the Jewish hierarchy, but
 - He was not arrested and no hands were laid on him
 - Why not? because, as the Scripture says “*his hour had not yet come*”
 - (Jn 12) Jesus announced to his disciples that
 - “*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified..*”

So this “hour” refers mostly to the time of Christ’s Passion

- Christ's Passion was
 - simultaneously the hour of
 - His agony & death
 - and His exaltation, the very source of everlasting life
- This hour was the appointed time
 - for the inauguration of the kingdom of God
- the hour when the will of God would be fulfilled.
- the hour when Satan would be defeated.

This "hour" was the event toward which Jesus' whole mission in life was directed.

- As such, all of Christ's energies
 - everything Jesus said and did
 - was done to strategically lead Him to His "hour"
 - to the accomplishment of His mission from God the Father

But we should recognize today that we too have an "hour"

- we too have a mission from God to discern
 - a mission from God to accomplish.
 - That mission is tailor-made for each of us
 - God planted you in these times
 - in this country
 - in your family – with all its plusses & minuses
 - For a reason...
 - He has given certain gifts to aid you in your mission
 - to include those
 - spelled out in our second reading today
 - God, our Creator, created you for a purpose
 - He has a specific plan for your life
 - Wouldn't you like to know what it is?
- Like Jesus, we should always evaluate if what we're doing is leading us to the accomplishment of our life's mission...

What's your specific mission? I cannot say – it's different for everyone.

It's truly for you to tune in to God daily to find out – ongoing discernment.

But I can say that for all of us, in our hour, we're called

- First: to recognize and accept “the hour” Jesus willingly endured for us
- And Second: to then make the appropriate response: namely
 - in the words of our Blessed Mother in today's Gospel
 - *“Do whatever He tells you.”* (Jn 2:5)

3. Do whatever He tells you...

- these words at Jesus' first public sign – also final words of Mary in the NT
 - What better advice could one give?
 - for *“perfect holiness is...”* (to quote St. Thomas Aquinas)
 - *“...obeying Christ in all things.”*

That's exactly what the servants did: they heeded the advice of Mary

- doing what Jesus told them
- And then we see the marvel of what happens
 - when man cooperates with the will of God:
 - Ordinary water was turned into
 - approx 150 gallons of high quality wine
 - It's the same grace we see in the story of
 - the multiplication of the loaves and fish.
 - Jesus takes man's rather meager offering of 5 loaves & 2 fish
 - and feeds the 5,000...
 - When man cooperates with the will of God
 - God takes our contribution and makes it truly magnificent
 - (Jn 10:10) *“I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly”*

So often in life, God answers prayers, responds to needs by

- working thru man, thru us, just as He worked thru the servants today
- He's seeking vessels, people who will offer their lives
 - and allow Him to work thru them

Note too that when Jesus told the servants to “*Fill the jars with water*”

- the servants didn’t ask for an explanation
- didn’t ask why they might be filling jugs with water
 - when what they need is wine.
 - Maybe they didn’t understand
 - but they cooperated with the will of God nonetheless
 - AND to the best of their ability:
 - filling the jugs “*to the brim*”
 - not a token effort, going just thru the motions, not mere lip service
 - they truly simply did whatever they could
 - and God took over from there...
- Can you imagine: if all the people who work in universities, in politics, in skilled trades, in restaurants, in finance, or in the home, etc
 - were to simply do their work to the honest best of their ability
 - and offer that work to God to use according to His will?
 - We would wake up tomorrow morning to a completely different world!

You see, our work can be turned into instruments of God’s grace too...

- Without God, our lives (like the water) are bland
 - lacking the ferment of purpose and meaning
 - until we offer our life to Jesus...
 - And then, He elevates, He transforms... our lives
 - “*Behold I make all things new...*” (Rev 21)

And so today our Gospel reading, as it always does, challenges us:

- In the wedding feast of your life
 - are you out of wine?
 - is your life empty? devoid of meaning & purpose?
- Follow the sage advice of our Blessed Mother: “*Do whatever He tells you*”
 - In your hour, cooperate with the will of God
 - Open your heart to Him – let Him use you

- and He will pour His Grace into you
- turning the water of your life into wine
 - and not just any wine...
 - but very good wine, in great abundance
 - *I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly...* (Jn 10:10)