

2nd Sunday after Epiphany- EF 2013
John 2: 1-11
Dcn. Pat Hall

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee... and manifested His glory, and His Disciples believed in Him.

This was the first of seven of what in the Gospel of John are called Signs. The other Signs are the cure of the royal official's son, the cure of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Jesus walking on the water, the cure of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus.ⁱ These are the miracles performed by Jesus through whom God becomes manifest, present to His people.

The wonderously amazing, imposing upon reality, contradicting of our senses miracles, are more importantly actions of God making his love known through and in the person of Jesus. This is so that we could believe and become one with God through that same person, Jesus.

While our story of the wedding is short, it is packed with meaning. This story has stirred Christian imaginations throughout the centuries, begging us to fill in the blanks with our own wonderings and hopes.

One of the images is the extravagance of the amount of wine for the wedding celebration, over 120 gallons worth. Modern Catholics have often pointed to this event when answering some of our Protestant brothers' and sisters' concerns about the morality of drinking alcohol, kind of our "Good enough for Jesus, good enough for me" justification. And yet I have doubts that the evangelist wrote our story for the justification of 21st Century drinking.

The extravagance of the wine triggers memories of Old Testament prophecies of the Messianic Age.ⁱⁱ Something new has begun. The Jewish ritual water is transformed into the wine for the messianic banquet.ⁱⁱⁱ

The images of the water and wine also trigger our memories of the transformative waters of baptism, the transubstantiation at the Last Supper and the sacrificial flow of water and blood from our crucified Lord's side.

Through such wondrous demonstrations of God's love, we are called to believe.

God reveals himself as concerned about us, not only for our eternal needs, but also intimately concerned about our daily needs.

Weddings are big on my mind right now. This Friday, Jan and I are marrying off another of our children. Our son, Mike, is marrying Marianne, a wonderful gal we are thrilled to call daughter. The event won't make newspaper headlines, but it is consuming all of our preparation and anticipation of our family right now. I

certainly sympathize with the anxiety of running out. Are we up to the task? Will we be able to meet our guests' needs? Will there be enough wine?

This gospel story supplies the answers to our pleading needs, whether for wedding preparations or other daily efforts.

The gospel shows that it is through Jesus, that our needs and wants are met. The gospel shows that the woman, the mother of Jesus, is instrumental in having our needs being made known. She intercedes for the bridegroom in his need for wine. She intercedes for us on behalf of our needs before her Son, our brother.

But we should not forget her instructions to the servers to do whatever her Son tells them to do. She commands us to do the same. Our response is obedience and faith.

And while Scripture is first and foremost a revelation of God, of who He is, that revelation inspires us to aspire to be the same.

As Jesus is God's manifestation at Cana, we are called to make Jesus manifest to those around us. How can we at St. Mary's be the instruments of providing God's transformative help to those in need?

As the mother of Jesus interceded for the bridegroom, how can we intercede for the needs of others? At Mass, Father places our prayers before our heavenly Father. But you know more clearly the needs of your family, loved ones and friends. Part of our offertory of gifts is not just offering our money, but the offering of prayers for those entrusted to us. Take them to Jesus' altar.

Just as the servers obeyed, may we respond to Jesus' prompting. While Jesus' commands may be as perplexing as filling with water and drawing out wine, if his command is clear, our obedience should be sure. While that can be intimidating, it can also be exciting as we are called to participate in the miracles, the signs that Jesus performs in our current age.

Just as the disciples moved to belief at the manifestation of Jesus' glory, may the eyes of our heart be open to the glorious light Jesus makes manifest to our world today. This is evident when we receive his very presence in communion.

Nourished and brought into communion with him here, may we go forth to be the manifestation of his glory to the world. May we be transformed and become a sign for Jesus.

ⁱ Most Reverend James A. Murray, *Rejoice on the Lord Always*, p. 91

ⁱⁱ *Amos 9,13-14; Joel 3, 18*

ⁱⁱⁱ Neal M. Flanagan, *The Gospel According to John and the Johannine Epistles*