

Caritas Fellowship

Miracles 2—Wedding at Cana

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Richard Crashaw

The modest water saw its God, and blushed.

John 2.1-11

On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; 2 Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. 3 When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. 9 When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." 11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.



Isaiah 25.6-9

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. 7 And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. 8 He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken. 9 It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Amos 9.13-14

"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. 14 I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit."

Hosea 2.14-23

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. 15 And there I will give her her vineyards, and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. 16 "And in that day, says the LORD, you will call me, 'My husband,' and no longer will you call me, 'My Ba'al.' 17 For I will remove the names of the Ba'als from her mouth, and they shall be mentioned by name no more. 18 And I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety. 19 And I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. 20 I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the

LORD. 21 "And in that day, says the LORD, I will answer the heavens and they shall answer the earth; 22 and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel; 23 and I will sow him for myself in the land. And I will have pity on Not pitied, and I will say to Not my people, 'You are my people'; and he shall say 'Thou art my God.'"

John 17.1,2

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, 2 since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him.

John Paul II

The miracle worked at Cana in Galilee, like Jesus' other miracles, is a sign: it shows the action of God in human life. It is necessary to meditate on this action to discover the deepest meaning of what took place there.

The wedding banquet at Cana leads us to think about marriage, whose mystery includes the presence of Christ. May it not be legitimate to see the presence of the Son of God at that wedding feast as an indication that marriage should be an effective sign of his presence?

...

Jesus invited us to turn to God with insistence and the confidence that we will be heard: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Mt 7:7). The basis for this power of prayer is the goodness of the Father, but also the mediation of Christ himself (cf. 1Jn 2:1) and the working of the Holy Spirit who "intercedes for us" according to the will of God (cf. Rom 8:26-27). For "we do not know how to pray as we ought" (Rom 8:26), and at times we are not heard "because we ask wrongly" (cf. Jas 4:2-3).

In support of the prayer which Christ and the Spirit cause to rise in our hearts, Mary intervenes with her maternal intercession. "The prayer of the Church is sustained by the prayer of Mary".(23) If Jesus, the one Mediator, is the Way of our prayer, then Mary, his purest and most transparent reflection, shows us the Way. "Beginning with Mary's unique cooperation with the working of the Holy Spirit, the Churches developed their prayer to the Holy Mother of God, centering it on the person of Christ manifested in his mysteries".(24) At the wedding of Cana the Gospel clearly shows the power of Mary's intercession as she makes known to Jesus the needs of others: "They have no wine" (Jn 2:3).

The Rosary is both meditation and supplication. Insistent prayer to the Mother of God is based on confidence that her maternal intercession can obtain all things from the heart of her Son. She is "all-powerful by grace", to use the bold expression, which needs to be properly understood, of Blessed Bartolo Longo in his Supplication to Our Lady.(25) This is a conviction which, beginning with the Gospel, has grown ever more firm in the experience of the Christian people. The supreme poet Dante expresses it marvellously in the lines sung by Saint Bernard: "Lady, thou art so great and so powerful, that whoever desires grace yet does not turn to thee, would have his desire fly without wings".(26) When in the Rosary we plead with Mary, the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:35), she intercedes for us before the Father who filled her with grace and before the Son born of her womb, praying with us and for us.

William Temple

Our first intercourse with Christ—such as we have watched in the typical instances recorded in Chapter I—brings about a change like that from water to wine. Christ is not a grim task-master in obedience to whom life becomes gloomy. He compared himself to children playing at weddings in contrast with John the Baptists whom He compared to children playing at funerals (Lk 7.31-35; Mt 1.16-19). Joy is one of the fruits of His Spirit. We wholly fail to represent Him to men if we fail to make men see this in our lives...

...For here we come to a secondary meaning of this sign. The first is the change effected by the touch of Christ upon our life; the second is the reminder that there is always more and better to come. Every man

puts forward first what is best about him. When people first meet us, they find us civil, friendly, considerate; but as they come to know us, especially if they have to live with us, they have to put up with the less good — that which is worse. But in our communion with God it is not so; as we deepen our fellowship with Him, made known in Christ, at every stage we may say, Thou hast kept the good wine until now.

Richard John Neuhaus

There can be no opposition, there can be not the slightest tension, between devotion to Mary and devotion to Christ. As both Protestants and many Catholics have failed to understand, to draw close to Christ is to draw close to Mary, and to draw close to Mary is to draw close to Christ. Mary is the model of discipleship and the icon of the Church precisely because she wants nothing for herself apart from her Son and her Lord. The last recorded words of Mary, at the wedding of Cana, are these: "Do whatever he tells you." All devotion to Mary is devotion to Christ. She seeks no honor apart from her Son and her Lord; she has no message other than "Do whatever he tells you."

Rodney Whitacre

Here in Cana this aloofness is followed by an enigmatic statement concerning his time, literally, "hour" (*hora*). This hour is a reference to his death and the events that follow (Jn 13:1; 17:1). It will be mentioned a number of times in the story, but no one is able to comprehend what he is talking about. Not surprisingly, then, this first mention of Jesus' "hour" is quite unintelligible to his mother. It is an entirely cryptic saying and, as with the other cryptic sayings in John, it reveals everything and nothing. Those who know the whole story realize Jesus is saying all of his ministry, even his signs in Galilee, are to be understood as done under the shadow of the cross, resurrection and ascension.

But his mother grasps none of this. She responds by turning to the servants and saying, Do whatever he tells you (2:5; cf. Gen 41:55). That is, in the face of Jesus' thoroughly enigmatic statement she leaves the initiative entirely with him. His saying has gone over her head. It sounds like it is slightly, or even completely, negative, but since she does not know what this "hour" is she cannot really be sure of what he means. So she continues her request for him to do something about the problem, but she does so in a way that leaves him entirely free to respond as he will. So a key element in Jesus' mother's character, as in that of the first disciples, is her leaving of the initiative with Jesus. In this openness to Jesus' will, we see her humility.

This picture of the mother of Jesus is very similar to that which shines through in the Synoptic accounts, especially in the Lukan infancy narratives (Lk 1-2). Mary's response to the annunciation, "May it be to me as you have said" (Lk 1:38), and the spirituality of the Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55) express this same docility before God. She is entirely Godward. She is poor in spirit and thus has entered the door of the kingdom of God described in the beatitudes (Mt 5:3). It is as true now spiritually as it was true for her physically that a person with such a disposition is the one to whom God comes and implants his seed and begets divine life (cf. 1 Jn 3:9). All generations are to call her blessed (Lk 1:48) because of the ineffable honor God has bestowed upon her: she was chosen from among all women to carry in her womb the Word that became flesh. She bore in her body for nine months the one who bears the universe in his hands. It is not without reason that Mary has held such an important place in Christian thought and life, both as the one who bore God the Son and as a model of someone who lived a truly Christian life. It is a great tragedy that she has become a figure of controversy within Christendom.