

**GOSPEL**

JOHN 2:1-11

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said, 'Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water,' and they filled them to the brim. 'Draw some out now,' he told them, 'and take it to the steward.' They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from - only the servants who had drawn the water knew - the steward called the bridegroom and said, 'People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink; but you have kept the best wine till now.'

This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him.

**A REFLECTION BY POPE FRANCIS**

Last Sunday, with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we began the journey in the liturgical time called "Ordinary"; the time to follow Jesus in his public life, in the mission for which the Father sent him into the world. In today's Gospel we find the narrative of Jesus' first miracle. The first of these prodigious signs takes place in the village of Cana, in Galilee, during a marriage celebration. It is not by chance that there is a wedding at the beginning of Jesus' public life, because in him, God espoused humanity: this is the Good News, even though those who invited him do not yet know that the Son of God is seated at their table and that he is the true bridegroom. Indeed all the mystery of the sign of Cana is based on the presence of this divine bridegroom, Jesus, who begins to reveal himself. Jesus manifests himself as the bridegroom of the People of God, announced by the prophets, and he reveals to us the depth of the relationship which unites us to him: it is a New Covenant of love.

In the context of the Covenant, the symbol of wine, which is at the heart of this miracle, is fully understood. Just as the feast is culminating, the wine runs out. Our Lady notices this and says to Jesus: "They have no wine". Because it would have been bad to continue the feast with water! An embarrassment for those people. Our Lady notices and, as she is a mother, she immediately turns to Jesus. The Scriptures, especially Prophets, point to wine as a typical element of the messianic banquet (Am 9:13-14; Joel 2:24; Is 25:6). Water is necessary to live but wine expresses the abundance of the banquet and the joy of the celebration. A feast without wine? I don't know.... By transforming into wine the water from the stone jars used "for the Jewish rites of purification" (v. 6) — it was customary: to purify oneself before entering a home — Jesus effects an eloquent sign. He transforms the Law of Moses into Gospel, bearer of joy.

And then, let us turn to Mary. The words that Mary addresses to the servants crown the spousal picture of Cana: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:6). Today too, Our Lady tells all of us to "Do whatever he tells you". These words are a precious legacy that our Mother left us. And indeed, the servants in Cana obey: "Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the steward of the feast.' So they took it". Truly, a New Covenant is pledged at this wedding. And a new mission is entrusted to the servants of the Lord, namely, the entire Church: "Do whatever he tells you". To serve the Lord means to listen and to put his Word into practice. It is the simple, essential recommendation of Jesus' Mother. It is the programme for a Christian's life.

I would like to highlight an experience which many of us have certainly had in life. When we are in difficult situations, when problems arise that we do not know how to resolve, when we feel a lot of anxiety and distress, when we lack joy, go to Our Lady and say: "We have no wine. The wine has run out: Look at the state I am in, look at my heart, look at my soul". Say it to the Mother. And she will go to Jesus to say: Look at this one: he or she has no wine. And then, she will come back to us and say: "Do whatever he tells you".

For each of us, drawing from the jar is tantamount to entrusting ourselves to the Word and to the Sacraments in order to experience God's grace in our lives. Then we too, as the steward who tasted the

water that had become wine, can say: "you have kept the good wine until now". Jesus always surprises us. Let us speak to the Mother so that she may speak to her Son and he will surprise us.

May she, the Holy Virgin, help us to follow his invitation: "Do whatever he tells you", so that we can fully open up to Jesus, recognizing in everyday life the signs of his vitalizing presence.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

- What is your reaction when filled with anxiety, worry or fear about 'how things will turn out' or 'what is happening'?
- Mary turns to Jesus and directs the servants to 'do whatever he [Jesus] tells you'. How have you known Jesus' guidance in your life? How might you listen more closely?
- Jesus' presence at the banquet showed both his closeness to the people and his desire to bring joy, peace and fullness of life? How has this been true of Jesus' presence in your life?

**PRAYER**

*Spend some time in prayer with one another*

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Move to prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps reciting the 'Glory Be' or similar prayer.