

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

GOSPEL

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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.

(John 2:1-11)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- Ritual cleanliness was important to the Jewish people. It was custom for them to wash thoroughly before eating or drinking, or after returning from the marketplace or the road, in case they had come into contact with someone or something that may have rendered them 'unclean'.
- In the Gospel of John, Jesus performs seven 'signs', and each is designed to reveal something about who he is. Through the sign described in today's text, Jesus ushers in the messianic banquet, a symbol of the Messiah that is often used in the Jewish Scriptures.
- This text reveals the third of the 'manifestations' of Christ, which have been read in succession over the last three weeks.

EXPLORING THE WORD

The Gospel of John depicts Jesus' first public act—and it is a woman, his mother, who initiates this first display of his divine origins, in which he 'let his glory be seen'. Her total trust that he will respond to her observation helps explain why we regard Mary as a model of faith and discipleship. Jesus takes the symbol of the old rituals of Israel—the water for ritual cleanliness—and transforms it into something new. This is a recurring theme in the Gospel of John. Another recurring theme is that of 'the hour' of Jesus. In the Gospel of John, 'the hour' will not be fulfilled until the supreme moment when Jesus shows the fullness of his love for both his Father and for all people—the moment when he is 'lifted up' on the cross. This story is about much more than performing a miracle at a wedding feast. In performing this sign, Jesus reveals something of the power and glory of God that operates in and through him. It is this revelation of God's glory that has a transformative effect on Jesus' disciples as they come to believe in him. The miracle at Cana announces the richness of God's gifts that Jesus has come to dispense. For the disciples—and for all who come to believe in Jesus—this is a life-changing event.

- How has your own encounter with the richness of God's bounty been a life-changing experience?
- How do you now experience God's abundance in your life?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- What makes you believe?
- What does Jesus provide for you?
- Where or how do you experience God's glory?
- 'Do whatever he tells you.' What do you think Jesus is telling you at this point in your journey?
- Offer hospitality in abundance to someone in need this week.
- Share stories of wonderful meals or banquets that you have experienced? What were the occasions? Describe the abundance. What effect did it have on those who shared the experience?
- Repeat often this week:

*Lord, you provide drink for my thirst
and food for my hunger.*

Lord, may I always share in your abundance.

SHARING THE TRADITION

A closer look at the Scripture of the day, to see how it makes more explicit God’s word to us through the teachings of Jesus Christ

This gospel text has particular significance in relation to marriage, which is one of the seven sacraments of the Church. ‘The Church attaches great importance to Jesus’ presence at the wedding at Cana. She sees in it the confirmation of the goodness of marriage and the proclamation that thenceforth marriage will be an efficacious sign of Christ’s presence’ (CCC, §1613).

- Discuss the sacramental understanding of marriage.
• Discuss the way that the love of God can be seen to be mirrored in the love of husband and wife for each other.
• You could look at the structure of the Marriage Rite and some of the prayers to see how these reflect the sign of Christ’s presence.

SYMBOLS AND IMAGES

In the Old Testament, a feast of great abundance was one image often used to describe the coming of the Messiah and the kingdom of God. In this gospel, Jesus changes an extraordinary volume of water into wine. In describing this sign, John is saying that the Messiah has come, that the messianic banquet has begun and that Jesus has inaugurated the kingdom of God. The abundance of God is already available.

LIVING THE WORD

Practical ideas for group leaders to employ in connecting Scripture and daily life, with suggestions for music and environment

- Are there social occasions in which your community comes together to share food and wine? Is it possible to involve the catechumens in these social occasions as a way of welcoming them?
• You could use a carafe of wine and the open Scriptures as a focus for prayer. A suitable song could be Taste and See/Drink in the Richness (GA 35). Pray for all those who do not have enough food or drink to sustain them. Pray for the abundance of God’s blessing in your own journey. Conclude with the prayer of exorcism in the RCIA at §94K.

NOTES

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