



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

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*When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him,
"They have no wine." John 2:2*

John calls the story of Cana the first "sign" of Jesus in John's gospel. (*"Jesus did this, the first of his signs..." John 2:11*) The story starts with us being told this happened *"on the Third Day."* This is part of a symbolic mystical sequence: First Day is the beginning of a manifestation of God's divine plan; Second Day happens as the Plan unfolds; Third Day is the fulfillment in time of God's divine plan.

The wedding symbolizes the New Age. John makes the point more obvious by noting the purpose of the stone jars. While they were necessary for the fulfillment of the Jewish laws of purification, in this story they stand empty. (*"Woe to you Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of ...everything unclean." Matt 23:27*) Jesus replaces the water with wine, symbolic of the spiritual movement from the exterior to the interiority, the Joy of the New Age.

The dialogue between Jesus and Mary is also rich with symbolic terms. Mary does not directly ask anything of Jesus; she simply notes the lack of wine. We can see this as a lackluster age depleted of joy. Jesus understands the comment as a request but voices his concern that his "hour" has not yet come. "Hour" is a key word in John's gospel, and it refers to the hour of Jesus' glorification, the hour of his death and resurrection.

Scripture scholars give an explanation to help us understand that Jesus is addressing his mother as *"woman," the "New Eve."* *"Woman, what concern is that to you and to me. My hour has not yet come." (John 2:4)* This is the first scriptural indication of the role that the Mother of God will take on as the caring Mother of Christ's Church. Jesus' answer, then, suggests that the New Age cannot come until his death and resurrection, though he anticipates it by changing the water into wine, the old outer purification into the inner sanctification and pure joy of a grace filled life. After his hour, the Church, through the intercession of his Mother will be able to ask freely for whatever is needed.

The Christian tradition has long seen in this story a reference to the Eucharist and the transformation of the wine into the blood of Christ. This episode and John's second "sign," the multiplication of the loaves are often depicted together in early Christian art.

Reflect on this story with a sense of newness as you practice the first movement of Lectio Divina, the "Art of Listening." Freshness and amazement will surely follow as you join through Holy Imagination the reaction of those who were present that day in Cana. The explanation of the symbols is an important first step in moving to a deeper reflection of the Mystical Church.

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A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

On the Third Day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee,
and the mother of Jesus was there.
Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.
When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him,
"They have no wine."
And Jesus said to her,
*"Woman, what concern is that to you and to me.
My hour has not yet come."*
His mother said to the servants,
"Do whatever he tells you."

Now standing there were six stone water jars
for the Jewish rites of purification,
each holding about a hundred liters.
Jesus said to the servants, *"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 chief steward."*
So they took it.

When the steward tasted the water that had become wine,
and did not know where it came from
(though the servants who had drawn the water knew),
the steward called the bridegroom and said to him,
*"Everyone serves the good wine first,
and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk.
But you have kept the good wine until now."*

Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee,
and revealed his glory;
and his disciples believed in him.
After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother,
his brothers, and his disciples;
and they remained there a few days.

The Gospel of the Lord