

“The Epiphany at Cana”

The first miracle of Jesus was the changing of water into wine at the wedding in Cana in Galilee. Like all the other Gospel readings selected for the Season of Epiphany (the Magi, the Baptism of Jesus, the healings, the casting out of demons, etc.) – this miracle “shows forth” who Jesus IS, and what He has come to do.

“When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). At Christmas, the time had fully come – the time for the Savior to be born.

When the time of waiting for the Savior’s birth was fulfilled at Bethlehem – another time of waiting ensued. We hear of Jesus in the Temple at age 12, and then not again until He is about 30 years old. That’s a long time to wait – especially for Mary, His mother.

Now Mary finds herself at a wedding in which they have run out of wine – so she turns to Jesus. She not only believes that He can provide what is needed – but maybe she’s also hoping that NOW will be the time for Him to be “shown forth” to the world as the Messiah.

After all, her time of waiting (like that of all Israel) – was filled with messianic promises. When the Messiah comes, the wine would be so plentiful that Jacob would wash his clothes in wine. Amos speaks of the Messiah – saying that the mountains would drip with sweet wine, flooding the hills and the earth – when He comes.

If ever there was a time for the wine to start flowing – it was now. So Mary brings the needs of the wedding party to the Messiah. But it’s NOT YET time. “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come,” He says.

His time has not fully come. The cross of Calvary is still some 3 years away – for it is there that the blood of the Messiah shall drip onto the hills and flood the earth with salvation. Jacob will not wash his garments in wine – but in the Blood of the Lamb – making them white, through His forgiveness.

Here in Cana, with this water changed to wine – Jesus is showing WHO He is and WHY He has come. This miracle – along with the miraculous healings and casting out of demons – shows that the Messiah has come to release all mankind from their bondage to sin – to bring joy to those who have “run out of wine.”

Such is your life today. It’s hard to wait when weighed down with sin. You’ve used up all your resources and now find yourself left “high and dry.” You’ve run out of wine. Instead of a joyous celebration with family and friends – life is full of frustration and despair – often the result of your own sinful failures.

It is no coincidence that the first recorded miracle of Jesus takes place at a wedding – for it is in the marriage of one man and one woman that we have a picture of our relationship to Christ. The union of husband and wife is a picture of the union of Christ and His Bride, the Church.

The Apostle Paul summarizes this relationship in but a few words. “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord” – and – “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church.” Yet in each and every marriage, husband and wife confess, “We’ve run out of wine.”

To willingly place yourself under the headship of a sinful man goes against your sinful nature that wants to be the lord of your own life. And to suffer all, even death, for the sake of a sinful woman – well, that’s hard to do when you are busy loving yourself.

Whether you are married, or not – you know what it is like to toil under the weight of sin. The “goodness” of life that God intended is sucked dry by the wages of sin. The joy of life is gone – the wine has run out – the celebration is over.

Dearly beloved, the time has fully come for you – for the Lord Jesus is present at THIS wedding feast – this Divine Service – where He serves to you the finest of wines. “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?” Mingling His holy and precious blood with this wine – Jesus pours out for you in this Bridal feast a banquet without comparison.

He lovingly invites you to come to the wedding feast He spreads upon His Table. Come and eat His precious body together with the bread offered here. Come and drink His holy blood together with the wine.

In this Body and Blood – His death replaces your death – His blood covers the multitude of your sins – His life of perfection replaces your life of sin. Your Bridegroom Jesus has sacrificed Himself for you, His Bride. And just as He changed water into wine at Cana – so even now, He changes your sin into His righteousness.

At the end of St. John' Gospel, the Lord reveals this wonderful truth to all with ears to hear. St. John writes, "Now Jesus did many other signs that are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name." (20:30-31)

At Cana, where Jesus first manifested His glory, "His disciples believed in Him." So today, at this wedding feast – Jesus is manifesting His glory to you – showing that His crucifixion, death and resurrection is all "for you" – His beloved Bride.

And believing, you have life in His name. His "good wine" flows for you today – so that you may rejoice that you have been united to Christ – a union that even death shall not separate.

So let us rejoice and celebrate with Jesus, our Bridegroom – already now in these days – at this feast. And then for all eternity with Him in the glory of heaven – in the marriage feast that has no end. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.