

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time C Dcn Bill O'Donnell

Where does the time go? Only two weeks ago, we gathered for Epiphany and then, last Sunday, the Lord's Baptism. Today we hear the story of the Wedding Feast at Cana. We celebrate these events, in this order, every year. While it does seem strange to leap so quickly from the babe in the manger to His first miracle, there is a good reason that we do this. The question is: What is the connection between the the Magi's gifts, Jordan's waters and Cana's wine?

When we celebrate Epiphany, we usually think of the three kings.... gold, frankincense and myrrh. But the word Epiphany means "manifestation" or "revelation," and traditionally the Feast of the Epiphany celebrates all three of these events. This can be easily missed by most of us, especially in the Western Church, because we are used to celebrating Epiphany as one day or a single event.

However, the links are not hard to see. Since we have discussed the incarnation rather often in Advent and Christmas, let us concentrate, for the time being, on these three events of the revealing of Christ and what they tell us.

The Magi's homage and the symbolism of their gifts, points to the divinity of this child-king who is to die for his people.

Jesus' baptism in the Jordan reveals a glimpse of God's inner life as Trinity as expressed in the voice of the Father and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.

And the wedding feast of Cana reveals the divine power at work in this carpenter from Nazareth.

St. John's gospel calls the Lord's miracles "signs." They all point to Jesus' divinity. But they also profoundly symbolize what it is that Jesus has come into this world to do for us.

At Cana, he transforms water into wine. Water is vitally important to us and without it... we cannot survive. However, for all of its importance, there is nothing particularly exciting about it. We drink it, wash with it, grow our food with it.....it is remarkably common.

But wine.... that's different stuff altogether, especially in ancient Israel, where it was something special, generally reserved for feasts and Sabbaths. It is a symbol of joy, and great blessing. Note that the wine Jesus provided was rich, flavorful, I imagine it was deep red and we are told it was of the very best quality.

To understand the importance of this particular miracle, we need to know a little bit about covenants and how they pertain to us today.

A biblical covenant is more than a legally binding contract. It was relational, that is, whoever entered into a covenant with another person, now had obligations as well as rights, as a member of the family.

Now, in scripture, when we speak of the Old Covenant, we are speaking of the family bond of God to His people, Israel.

Now, the Old Covenant was good. In fact, like water, it is vital, in the sense that it allowed us to know that there is only one God and that the way to please him is through just actions.

But this covenant did not tell the whole story. For instance, God as Trinity, is revealed only in shadows.

Nor did the Old Covenant provide people with the power needed to live out the covenant. It had to be lived out by a strong will and love for God, but by human effort.

Jesus transforms this situation. He establishes, by His life, death and resurrection a New Covenant. Remember, this is a Family Bond. And in this covenant, we can now live in intimacy...a family relationship with God, where we share in the eternal celebration of love between Father, Son and Spirit.

And the new law of the Covenant is not written on stone tablets, but rather in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who divinely empowers Christians to live it.

How does Jesus work this transformation? Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the very same Spirit that:

- *transformed chaos..... into the universe*
- *transformed a young virgininto the Mother of God*
- *transforms bread and wine.....into the body and blood of Christ*
- *and, incidentally.....transformed water into wine at Cana.*

Through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, we are given the gifts of that same Holy Spirit, so that we might live rightly, act justly and be in a family relationship with God and with one another. We are truly transformed into members of Jesus' body. We are transformed into the living and breathing Church.

And in today's second reading, St. Paul tells us that while there are different works of the Spirit, it is the same God who accomplishes all of them in each and everyone of us.

Some years back at a high school reunion I was talking to a classmate who left the Catholic Church to become a Pentecostal Minister. Now, Churches that call themselves Pentecostal are characterized by an emphasis of the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of their believers. I pointed out to him that we Catholics belong to the largest Pentecostal Church in the world.

The problem is that we who are given the wonder of the gifts of the Holy Spirit don't always act like it.

So what is needed to re-awaken the Holy Spirit that often lies dormant in the lives of so many Catholics? Going back to Cana, it seems to me that if Mary's intercession could be a catalyst for the first miracle, it could be the catalyst for many more.

Here is an example of how that can look.

Think of the very best relationship you have ever.....ever been in with another person. Now, be honest, as good as it was... or is, it is not perfect. And the biggest obstacle to a perfect relationship is our own imperfections.

Now, if the New Covenant is relational, (that is we are called to be in a relationship with Jesus Christ) then it makes sense to look toward the one person who was, and still is in perfect relationship with Jesus...His....Our... Blessed Mother.

And how amazing that relationship must have been.

Jesus and Mary, in all of human history, where the only to people to be conceived without sin and to remain without sin.

But, indeed, that is the relationship Jesus desires to have with each and every one of us, not just in heaven, but now.

Might I suggest that when we struggle in our relationship with God, and we do, turn to Mary. She is uniquely able to show us how to live in relationship with Her Son. She is able to help us live in relationship with one another. She waits to bring us closer to Jesus. All we need do is ask.