

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time C, 2013

I think it is helpful to think of these first weeks after Christmas as a season of “epiphanies.”

Now, Epiphany, to most of us, means the three kings. But the term means “manifestation” or “revelation,” and traditionally the Feast of the Epiphany celebrates three events, the Magi’s visit, the Lord’s baptism, and the wedding feast at Cana.

Did you ever stop to think the very first thing that happens in Genesis after creation is a marriage, Adam to Eve, man to woman; two becoming one?

And it is no accident that the Book of Revelation, the last book in Holy Scripture, ends in a wedding feast.

Throughout the Bible, marriage is the symbol of the covenant relationship God desires with His chosen people. He is the Groom, humanity His beloved and sought-after bride. We see this reflected beautifully in today’s First Reading.

**For the LORD delights in you
and makes your land his spouse.
As a young man marries a virgin,
your Builder shall marry you;
and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride
so shall your God rejoice in you.**

At Cana, Our Lord suggests that this same relationship will exist between Himself and the New Israel. He would be the bridegroom, we, the Church would be His bride. That is how St. Paul can say, **“Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for it.”**

A marriage feast is a time of great joy, and wine is served as a symbol of that joy.

And so when Mary says to Jesus, **“They have no wine”** she is effectively saying that the people have no joy. On a small scale she speaks of the guests at Cana, but in the larger scheme she speaks of Israel. They have

no wine. Abraham, Moses, the prophets, they are all gone. The Old covenant, written on stone had to be lived out by the sheer will of its followers. It gave no power... on its own, it gave no joy.

Jesus comes to transform this situation.

It is time for new wine. It is time for Jesus to break His silence, to step from the shadows and claim His bride.

And so His mother said to the servers,
“Do whatever he tells you.”

(SHORT PAUSE)

These words are not just an exhortation to follow the words of Christ. And while they are an example of faith and prayer and petition, they are much more. They are words of surrender. Mary knew that once Jesus performed this sign, everything would be different. He would not just belong to her, but to all, to us. In these words Mary dies to herself to give us her Son.

These are the last words we hear from the lips of Mary in all of Scripture. From this moment on, it is all Jesus.

(PAUSE)

The new wine that Jesus pours out at Cana's feast is the gift of the Holy Spirit given to His bride, the Church.

At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church officially taught that the charisms or gifts of the Holy Spirit that Paul so aptly describes in the second reading were not limited to the apostolic times but are for all times and are poured out upon all the faithful through baptism and confirmation.

The Holy Spirit is the transformative power of God in our lives . . . Water to wine, the ordinary to the extraordinary. Yet, so many of our Christian brothers and sisters, so many fellow Catholics, so many of us accept the ordinary life.

So what is needed to awaken the wondrous power of the Spirit that lies dormant in the lives of so many Catholics?

The answer is before us today.

Each time we gather here, it is the wedding feast of the Lamb of God. Jesus renews with us the vows of the New Covenant. The marriage of Christ and His Church breathes and gains life in this place.

Here water does not become wine – wine becomes blood, bread becomes flesh. At the altar, the ordinary, the common, no longer exists. Heaven is joined to Earth and God reaches out to us, poor creatures who would be without hope were it not for Christ, for Calvary, for the Resurrection.

(PAUSE)

As the Bride of Christ let us reach out to Jesus our Groom, our source of life.

Life in Christ is a nuptial feast; Cana tells us that today. Life in Christ is also a matter of surrender. Mary shows us that today.

Come to the feast, drink the blood of her son, eat His flesh – and let your Amen be your surrender.