

The Wedding at Cana by Fr Martin Fox

*There are an abundance of blessings
in this Gospel story—
allow me to share some of them with you.*

*“There was a wedding—
and the mother of Jesus was there.”*

*In this Gospel, the Apostle John,
never calls Mary by name,
but always “mother” or—
in two places—“Woman.”*

*The thought of a wedding invokes many images:
Joy. Celebration. Family and friends. New Beginning.*

*Everything here signals we are talking about
things on two levels: natural, and supernatural.*

*The Old Testament prophets used images of abundance
to describe the coming of the Messiah.
The first reading describes God
making a marriage with his people.*

And wine is often an image of the Holy Spirit.

*This story begins with Mary, the Mother.
She is already there when Jesus arrives with his disciples.*

*Before this, Jesus had gone down to the Jordan,
to be baptized; then he started gathering followers:
then he comes back to Galilee to the wedding.*

*When Mary last saw her Son, he was alone;
now, she sees him return, with followers.
Mary, who ponders all these things in her heart,
knows something is starting to happen.*

John, emphasizing Mary as mother,

means not just for Jesus, but for all the faithful.

*This is why Jesus calls her “Woman.”
That will get you in trouble if you call your mother that!*

*But hear it on the spiritual level:
this refers back to the first woman.
In Genesis, Adam called her “Eve,
because she became mother of all the living.”*

*Jesus is the New Adam—and he is calling Mary,
the new Eve, because she will be mother
of all who have life through him.*

*Mother Mary is eager for her role in bringing
her Son’s plan of salvation to birth.
She’s ready for the abundance about to happen.*

*So we’re puzzled when Jesus responds,
“how does your concern affect me?”
That’s a hard phrase to translate;
it often expresses challenge or distance.
But that won’t work in this story.
The meaning becomes clear when he says,
“My hour has not yet come.”*

*The Lord is not offended by Mary’s eager intervention.
Calling her “Woman” signals he wants her
to be the New Eve, mother of all the faithful.
What he is saying is, “not yet.”*

*He is not objecting to the miracle.
Some think Mary “talks him into it”—
but I don’t believe that.*

*I believe he intends to do the miracle,
and Mary—very spiritually attuned—
picks up on that.
If you look very closely at this story,
you will realize there’s a dialogue between them*

*that isn't expressed in words.
That shows how closely knit her heart is to his.*

*In what we might have thought
a chilly conversation
is actually a tremendous compliment—
The best compliment the Lord ever paid anyone:
I cannot think of any other occasion where
God had to slow someone down
in pursuit of his work of salvation!*

*Would that the Lord said that to us:
“You're so eager for my plan,
you're getting ahead of me!”
That's what his “not my hour” means.*

*The next—and only other—
time he calls her “Woman,”
they will meet again at the Cross.
Then his hour will have come;
and then, Jesus will say, “Behold your mother!”
He gives her the green light!*

*Why is Mary so eager? She is full of the New Wine:
the Holy Spirit, who filled her from her conception.*

*When I first meet with couples preparing to marry,
we read and discuss this Gospel.*

*I invite them to see in the water-made-wine,
what Jesus wants to do in their lives.
He turns the ordinary into extraordinary.*

*Not just any wine—but the very best!
Not just some, but filled to the brim!*

*He makes abundance happen through us,
and we become a blessing to others.
The abundance the Lord wants to give
comes when we submit ourselves to him:*

*His to command and dispose of—
to be a blessing to others.*

*The abundance of priests we need—
this is how it will happen.*

*The deep conversion we need in our lives—
This is what opens the door.*

*This is how marriages persevere—no other way.
This is how couples get past
the cramped mindset of our society,
that only has so much room for children.*

*Voices around us tell us to be afraid
of the challenge of faithfulness,
the challenge of family life.*

*Many families have told me about
the disapproval and mockery they face
when a fourth, or fifth child, is on the way.*

*Voices say it is “irrational” to have large families.
And yet, Europe, Russia and Japan
are having so few children, they are dying out.*

*Their economies are stagnating;
They face huge problems with social security.
You’ve heard it said that China
has “too many” people; in fact,
they face the same problems in later decades.*

*As does our country.
Our growth is mostly from immigration.*

*The problems we hear about with Social Security
are almost entirely because we have too few
new workers coming into the system.*

Our schools have too few students.

*Piqua isn't growing; Ohio isn't growing—
and our economy suffers as a result.*

*When the Lord is in charge—
there is always abundance—
not “too many people” or “too few resources”;
that is seeing things without spiritual vision.*

*God gives abundance—our world's problem
is that we mismanage that abundance!*

*Notice those jars were there for another purpose.
But the Lord took them, and changed their purpose.
He will often do that with us.*

*Our day—our lives—
often unfold in ways we don't expect.
Maybe we resent it; sometimes it means real sacrifice.
Still, the new wine our lives become
always proves to be the best of all!*