The Wedding At Cana (John 2: 1-11)

The Wedding at Cana. 1[a] On the third day there was a wedding[b] in Cana[c] in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” 4[d] [And] Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” 5 His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” 6[e] Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it. 9 And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” 11 Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs[d] in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

Understanding the Context (John 1:1-2:1)

John begins his account of the wedding at Cana with a phrase that is easy to overlook: “On the third day.” On the third day of what? Let us back up and explore the context of John's Gospel before we go further into Chapter 2.

1. John's Gospel begins with many images from the story of Creation in Genesis 1. Read John 1:1-5. What are some of the ways these verses recall the story of Creation?

   a. The Creation theme continues as John narrates a series of days that together make up a new Creation week. John 1:19 is the first day in the narrative that reports the testimony of John the Baptist. Read that and then read about the others, which are listed in order below. For each one, record what happens and when the Gospel says the event takes place.

   John 1:29:

   John 1:35-36:

   John 1:43:

   John 2:1:

   b. Review your responses to 2.a. and count through the days until you reach the wedding at Cana. On what day in John's narration is the wedding? You may use the box on the next page to help you calculate. Write your answer in the blank space at the bottom.
John lays out a carefully structured timeline of events at the start of his Gospel, culminating in the start of Jesus' public ministry at the wedding at Cana.

3. Think About It: Given the symbolism of the Creation story that you have seen in John's Gospel, what might John be pointing out with this symbolism involving the number of days?

No Wine, but Much Faith (John 2:1-3)

4. Read John 2:1-3, in which Mary brings the shortage of wine to Jesus' attention.

a. At this point in the Gospel, Jesus has yet to perform any miracles. What might this tell us about Mary's faith in her son? See also John 20:29.

b. What might Mary's example teach us?

The Woman (John 2:4-10)

5. Read John 2:4. How does Jesus reply to Mary's request, and what do you think of his reply?

6. Now read John 2:5. How does this verse suggest that Mary interprets Jesus' words?

7. Read John 2:6-10. Do these verses seem to indicate that Jesus is refusing Mary's request or responding positively to her petition? Explain.

8. Old Testament Connection: Read Genesis 3:14-15. These verses represent the first messianic prophecy in the Bible. In light of Genesis 3:15, what is Jesus saying about himself and about his mother when he calls her “woman”? Read also CCC 410-411.
“Do Whatever He Tells You” (John 2:5-11)

9. Confident that her son will answer her request, Mary says to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you” (verse 5). These words recall a theme of obedience in the Old Testament and offer rich insight into how we are called to be obedient.

a. Read the following passages in which the people of Israel make or renew their covenant with God after having heard the Word of the LORD spoken to them. Note what the people say they will do in response to what God says.

Exodus 19:8:

Joshua 24:24:

Nehemiah 5:12:

b. How do you think this Old Testament background sheds light on Mary's instruction to the servants to "do whatever he tells you"?

c. How might Mary's instruction inspire you to follow God's Word more closely in your life?

10. Nearby stand six stone jars, the kind used to hold water for the ceremonial washing required before a meal. Each would be large enough to hold twenty to thirty gallons of water, but they are apparently empty—possibly the water has already been used by the guests at the wedding.

a. For each verse below, note what Jesus commands and how the servants respond.

John 2:7:

John 2:8:

b. How faithful do you think the servants are in responding to Jesus' commands? Explain...

C. What might the servants' exemplary response tell us about the impact of Mary's exhortation in this scene?
11. When the steward tastes the water, it has miraculously become fine wine. Read John 2:11.

a. What does this verse tell us about the significance of Jesus' action at the wedding feast?

b. What might this verse tell us about the role and importance of Mary in Jesus' public ministry?

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**Mary, Our Advocate**

The wedding at Cana is our first glimpse of Mary's role as intercessor and advocate. Just as Mary notices the shortage of wine at the wedding at Cana and takes the need straight to her son, Mary our mother notices our needs before we do and takes them to Jesus. We ask for her intercession every time we pray the Hail Mary and in a special way when we pray the Rosary. In Rosarium Virginis Mariae 16, St. John Paul II writes:

"In support of the prayer which Christ and the Spirit cause to rise in our hearts, Mary intervenes with her maternal intercession. “The prayer of the Church is sustained by the prayer of Mary’ (CCC 2679). If Jesus, the one Mediator, is the Way of our prayer, then Mary, his purest and most transparent reflection, shows us the Way. ...

“The Rosary is both meditation and supplication. Insistent prayer to the Mother of God is based on confidence that her maternal intercession can obtain all things from the heart of her Son. ... When in the Rosary we plead with Mary, the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 1:35), she intercedes for us before the Father who filled her with grace and before the Son born of her womb, praying with us and for us.”

- *St. John Paul II, Rosarium Virginis Mariae (“The Rosary of the Virgin Mary”) 16.*

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**D. Application**

**Reflect** Put yourself in the scene at Cana and prayerfully imagine being one of the servants at the wedding feast. Picture Mary turning to you and saying, “Do whatever he tells you.” How do those words from Mary make you feel? Are you willing to do whatever God wants in your life?

**Commit** Prayerfully take time to tell Jesus you desire to do his will. Then ask him to show you something he wants for your life now, and ask him for the grace to do it.

**Pray** Ask our Blessed Mother and “most gracious advocate” to intercede on your behalf, perhaps using the Hail, Holy Queen prayer we say with the Rosary.

*Hail, Holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God... that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*