

**SPIRITUALITY**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

See 2 Thess 2:14

*R.* Alleluia, alleluia.

God has called us through the Gospel  
to possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*R.* Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel** John 2:1-11; L66C

There was a wedding at Cana in  
Galilee,  
and the mother of Jesus was  
there.

Jesus and his disciples were also  
invited to the wedding.

When the wine ran short,  
the mother of Jesus said to him,  
“They have no wine.”

And Jesus said to her,  
“Woman, how does your con-  
cern affect me?”

My hour has not yet come.”

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

Now there were six stone water jars there  
for Jewish ceremonial washings,  
each holding twenty to thirty gallons.

Jesus told them,  
“Fill the jars with water.”

So they filled them to the brim.

Then he told them,  
“Draw some out now and take it to the  
headwaiter.”

So they took it.

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  
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.”

Jesus did this as the beginning of his  
signs at Cana in Galilee  
and so revealed his glory,  
and his disciples began to believe in him.

**Reflecting on the Gospel**

How many of us have been to a wedding party preceded by the groom’s dinner, which is itself preceded by a number of festivities celebrating the bride and groom and their new life together? There are standard elements in most wedding celebrations, including the exchanging of vows (within a Mass or not) and usually a dinner or some food is served to the guests. Quite often there is dancing or some other activity. It’s a day to remember for the guests, the hosts, the bride and groom, and their families. Family stories will be told for many years after each wedding, as legends become lore.

In antiquity, marriage celebrations followed a pattern as well, as reflected in today’s gospel. One such cultural element that is still followed today(!) is that the best wine is served before a lesser quality wine. Such norms are the background setting for Jesus’ first sign, as narrated by the Gospel of John. (In the Gospel of John, Jesus performs seven signs rather than a myriad of miracles, and the signs are indications of his true identity.) Interestingly, this gospel is the only one to tell this story. The Synoptic Gospel writers neglect this story: they may not have been aware of it.

Although liturgically we are in Year (or Cycle) C when we read from the Gospel of Luke, we begin Ordinary Time with this reading from the Gospel of John, which does not refer to Jesus’ mother

by name, for she is never named in this gospel, but rather, Mary is called “the mother of Jesus.” According to this gospel, not only is she present at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, but she will be present at the cross too, accompanied by the Beloved Disciple (who, like the mother of Jesus, remains nameless). For the Gospel of John, the emphasis is on Jesus to such a degree that the other characters do not even have names!

And this is a good point for us. Namely, our emphasis should be on Jesus and his true identity. It is easy to be drawn away from him and look to novelties or curiosities. But in the Fourth Gospel we have stories of seven signs that Jesus performs, each revealing his identity as Son of God, the Word made flesh. We need look no further. For the disciple, and certainly for the evangelist, the focus is on Jesus for he is the incarnation of the Word of God and his words are life eternal.

**Living the Paschal Mystery**

Jesus was a living, breathing human being with a mother, father (Joseph), brothers, and sisters according to the Synoptics. According to today’s gospel reading, he attended a wedding feast, and we can probably assume this was not his first or last wedding feast. In the shortest of all the Bible verses, according to many translations, the Gospel of John later tells us, “And Jesus wept” (11:35; NABRE). In sum, Jesus was a human being rather than a divine puppet. He experienced emotions from celebrating at a wedding to weeping at the death of a friend. Ultimately, he faced death itself, as each of us will. By undergoing his passion a death, which led to resurrection and life, he gives us the promise of life eternal. In Jesus, divinity became humanity thus exalting humanity to the divine. The paschal mystery nourishes our faith with the knowledge that our own personal death will lead to eternal life because of what God has done in Christ.



**Focusing the Gospel**

**Key words and phrases:** Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

**To the point:** In the Gospel of John we do not hear of Jesus performing “miracles”; instead he offers “signs” that reveal his own identity and the nature of the kingdom of God. From this first sign in Cana we can glean that the kingdom is like a wedding feast where the wine will never run out and the joy grows ever deeper.

**Connecting the Gospel**

**to the first reading:** The wedding theme of today’s gospel is echoed in the first reading in which the prophet Isaiah assures Israel that “[a]s 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.” Just as a wedding feast is an apt image for the kingdom of God, marriage is a metaphor used in both the Old and New Testaments to symbolize the relationship God desires with God’s people. This relationship is not without its difficulties. But even after infidelity—when the people of God turned away from the covenant and worshiped idols—God remains faithful.

**to experience:** All relationships, especially marriage, require work and celebration to keep the relationship vital. How do you set aside time to nurture and celebrate your relationship with God?

**Connecting the Responsorial Psalm**

**to the readings:** The psalmist enjoins us, “Sing to the LORD a new song.” In the first reading from Isaiah, the prophet announces that Israel will receive a new name. Instead of “[d]esolate” or “[f]orsaken,” Israel shall now be called “[e]spoused.” Isaiah tells the nation, recently brought out of exile in Babylon, to begin again in their homeland to live out the covenant with their God. At the wedding feast in Cana we encounter Jesus who is also on the edge of something new. At the behest of his mother, he performs his first public sign and begins to reveal his identity to those closest to him. Our God is one of new beginnings and we are called to be a people of hope who believe that newness is possible: new behaviors, new actions, new love, and new life.

**to psalmist preparation:** In worship, we often return to the songs that we know and love to express our adoration for God. Today the psalmist reminds us to sing something new. The creator God invites us to embrace our own God-given creativity. Where are you being called to newness in your own life?

**PROMPTS FOR FAITH-SHARING**

In the first reading from Isaiah we see our relationship to God as that of a bride and bridegroom. One metaphor alone cannot contain the mystery of our covenant with God. In what ways is this metaphor helpful and true for you in your spiritual journey?

In the psalm we are encouraged to “sing to the LORD a new song.” Where might God be calling you to “newness” in your own life?

Read through the list of spiritual gifts in the second reading (1 Cor 12:8-10). What gifts do you recognize in your own life and community? Which gifts are your community in need of at this moment in time?

Jesus’ signs disclose himself and the kingdom of God to us. What does today’s gospel about the wedding feast in Cana reveal to you about Jesus’ nature and kingdom?