

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
Year C: Is 62:1-5; Ps 96; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Jn 2:1-11  
January 16, 2022  
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The wedding at Cana is one of the most fascinating scenes reported to us in the Gospels. On the surface, it's a very human and natural scene of the happy occasion of a wedding. But beneath the surface, it's much more than that. As the events of the wedding celebration unfold, it ends up as the beginning of Christ's revelation of who He was. It ends up as a very mysterious and supernatural moment, loaded with spiritual significance for all of us.

On the natural, human level, the wedding was a common celebration of a happy occasion. But then the wine ran short, and this would have caused great embarrassment for the newlyweds and their families hosting the party. As Pope Francis says, "Wine is necessary for a feast." "Just imagine," he said, "ending a wedding feast drinking tea" (Meditation in MAGNIFICAT for January 16, 2022, quoting General Audience of June 8, 2016). It would have been an embarrassment for the married couple and their families not to be able to serve wine to their guests. And the Gospel tells us that Mary noticed the problem, possibly even before the married couple were aware of the risk of embarrassment. So, Mary turned to her Son and said to Jesus, "*They have no wine.*" It was out of compassion for the married couple that Mary brought this to the attention of her Son. She undoubtedly believed that He could do something about it.

Mary would have also known that, if Jesus performed a miracle to solve the problem of the wine, it would have revealed that He was no ordinary man. And yet, she still turned to Him to do something about the situation. But the first mysterious thing about this scene is what Jesus said to His mother in reply. He said, "*Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.*" It seems pretty clear that Jesus was telling His mother that it was not the right time, determined by God the Father, for Him to begin his miracles, which would have revealed who He was. So, it *seems* that Jesus was telling His mother that He would not do anything about the wine.

But, then in the next instant, Mary turns to the servers and says, "*Do whatever he tells you.*" It seems that Mary just ignores the reply of Christ and attempts to overrule both Him and God the Father by insisting that it was time to perform a miracle and to reveal His identity. It also seems that Mary was convinced that Christ *would* do something, even though He had just said it was not yet time to perform a miracle. And then when Jesus does, in fact, perform a

miracle by turning the water into wine, it looks like He allows His Mother, and not God the Father, to make the decision that it was time for Him to begin His revelation.

All of this is what makes the wedding at Cana such a mysterious scene in the Gospel. On the surface, it was just a natural, human occasion, but underneath the surface, it was also a deeply mysterious and supernatural occasion, when Jesus “*revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.*”

This scene also challenges us to understand the role that Mary played in God’s plan of redemption. On the surface, it looks like Mary overruled both her Son and God the Father in deciding that it was time for Jesus to begin His miracles. This would present a problem, though, because, although Mary was the Mother of God, she was still utterly obedient to God, as we know, and she would not have dared to set aside or ignore God’s decision about such an important matter. One spiritual author says we can understand this scene better if we imagine that at the same time Jesus spoke audibly to His Mother for everyone to hear, saying, “*My hour has not yet come,*” He also communicated spiritually and silently to her soul, letting her know that God the Father had heard her prayers and had granted her request for Him to perform this miracle (cf. Edward Leen, *In the Likeness of Christ*, p. 170, note 24).

It was not the case that Mary changed God’s mind, but rather that two things were happening and being revealed to us. First, Jesus was revealing that God the Father had a plan from eternity about how He would reveal His glory and accomplish His work of redemption. But second, the Gospel scene reveals to us that God was open to Mary’s pleading and prayers and was willing to grant her request for her Son’s help. In this way, the scene tells us about the power of Mary’s intercession with God, and it also tells us about the relationship between our prayers and God’s plan for the world. Our prayers do not change God’s mind, but God’s eternal plan is open to our prayers and incorporates them and, in some way, is determined by them. Isn’t this, after all, why Jesus told us to pray without ceasing (cf. Lk 18:1-8; Mt 7:7)?

God invites us to cooperate with His plan for the world through the power of our prayers, which are used by God from eternity to merit and unleash blessings and favors upon the world. We know not every prayer is always granted, but God’s plan for the world still incorporates our prayers, which is why it is so important to be a prayerful people. Wouldn’t it be great, if one of the things people said about the parish of St. Julie’s is, “They are a prayerful bunch of people, who cooperate with God by their constant prayers”? *Please God*, let it be true.