

Second Sunday of Ordinary Time-C

Jn 2:1-12

Dear Friends.

John's Gospel always has many levels to its message. John is particularly strong in revealing the eternal in the mundane events in Jesus' activities. Today's text centers on Mary and Jesus' intervention in a small crisis at a village wedding. The mundane events of poor planning open up into the divine reality.

There are many elements to this simple story of Cana. The most important is the identity of Jesus. He is the new wine of the long-awaited messianic age. His teachings, his proclamation the kingdom, his message of wisdom all come together to announce a new day. The water becoming wine was an opening challenge to the Jews of his day and to all of us today. The person and wisdom of God have taken flesh among us. We are challenged to respond in faith.

John goes to great lengths to present Jesus as the one replacing the Jewish rituals and teachings. He is now the way to encounter God. Jesus' role is symbolized in the wine transformed from the water which represented all the cleansing rituals of the Jewish faith experience. In the new day, the power of God now resides in the person of Jesus. In both the quantity and quality of the new wine we see the beginning of the answer to the long-awaited time of God's final intervention. This is similar to Jesus' opening statement in Mark: **"This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand!"** (Mk 1:15)

John again invites us to go beyond the surface when we ponder the event's true love story. For John, the gentle and touching experience of the bridal couple is engulfed and transcended in the love God reveals for all humanity in Jesus. The

true bridegroom of the story is Jesus, the final revelation of God's love for all of us.

John's Gospel is always filled with many unexpected twists and turns. The role of Mary in this story falls into this pattern of paradox and surprise. John never uses the name Mary to refer to the mother of Jesus. He has Jesus address her as "**woman.**" In another twist of the story's flow, and in contradiction to Jesus' words, Mary initiates the whole process by giving the awesome task to the servants: "**Do whatever he tells you.**" (Jn 2:5) Mary's role in this story is made much clearer by seeing it in relation to her encounter her crucified son at the foot of the cross.

The title "**woman**" rather than being a sign of disrespect opens up a whole new horizon. It connects Mary to Eve in Genesis. Mary is now the New Eve, the mother of all in the new family Jesus summons into existence. His invitation is to accept his call. He is the "**new wine**" leading to eternal life. Mary's role in the story of Cana foreshadows her mission. She is both the mother of all believers and the model and support of all disciples.

Like Mary, we are called to respond to needs of our neighbor. We need to see and respond with her urgency and sensitivity wrapped up in the declaration, "**They have no wine.**" (Jn 2:3) Likewise, we need to hear and embrace her words of wisdom, "**Do whatever he tells you.**" (Jn 2:5) More than usual, these insights offer comfort and reinforcement for married life.