

III EPIPHANY 2017

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

ROMANS 12.16 St. JOHN 2.1

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It was a beautiful day. The wedding had concluded hours ago. The guests were having a great time at the reception. Everything was going just fine...then the wine ran out. What was the host to do?

We know almost nothing about Jesus' early life from the time he was born until he began his public ministry shortly after his baptism by his cousin John the Baptist. Saint Luke records his Circumcision when he was 8 days old, his Presentation when he was 40 days, and Mary and Joseph finding him in the Temple when he was 12 years old.

The Wedding at Cana gives us a rare glimpse into the social life of the adult Jesus and his family and friends. He was about 30 years old and the action in the Gospel takes place shortly after his Baptism and the time he spent in the desert getting ready for his public ministry.

Saint John the Evangelist is the only Gospel writer who talks about the Wedding of Cana...and for him it is a significant moment for Jesus and those at the wedding reception. It is the event prompting Jesus to perform his first public miracle...a showing of who he is.

Cana was a small town in Galilee not far from Nazareth...the town where Jesus was raised. It was a poor community of hard-working people. Galilee was Gentile territory with a sizeable Jewish population. Weddings could go on for days...John tells us this is the third day of the wedding celebration.

When we are invited to a wedding we don't normally concern ourselves with the food and beverage service that will take at the reception afterward. We're guests...we assume everything has been handled and we enjoy ourselves.

Jesus' mother appears to be overly concerned about the matter when she learns the wine has run out. Perhaps she was a relative of the bride or bridegroom or had something to do with organizing the reception. Regardless, she asks Jesus to do something to remedy the situation.

We might consider Jesus' response...telling her she must not tell him what to do...it wasn't the right time for him to take action...to be a classic son talks back to mother. Jesus is actually using a common way of speaking that means something like, "Yes, mom, I know."

Jesus was already aware of the host's predicament. We are not told why the wine ran out...perhaps the host didn't order enough...perhaps more people came to the wedding reception than were expected. And Jesus took action...to make things right again.

Jesus used the wedding reception in a small backwater town in Galilee to perform his first miracle...an epiphany...a showing of himself...turning water into wine. The wedding guests didn't care where the wine came from...they just wanted more. What they got was better than any wine available from the local Bev-mo.

The Wedding at Cana shows us Jesus endorses marriage between a man and woman...and he thinks a wedding reception is a pretty good idea too. It also shows us Jesus and Mary and their friends knew how to have fun. Did God's Son have fun and enjoy life? Yes...and he wants us to enjoy life to the fullest.

Jesus' disciples were among the few who witnessed his first public miracle. John says they believed but they could not have understood the full meaning of what they had just seen. Jesus turning water into wine shows us he has power over nature...only God has that power...Jesus is God. Jesus liked good wine too...he is a human being.

At every Mass Jesus gives us something better than what we started with...himself in the Sacrament of the Altar. Ordinary bread and wine become for us his Body and Blood...an epiphany...a showing like nothing else. The Mass has often been called a window into heaven...looking forward to the Great Wedding Reception waiting for us in heaven.

Jesus has revealed his glory (his Light) to us...with grace and truth he has shown himself to be the Light of the World...in Word and Sacrament...and that gives us every reason to believe in him too.

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