

III Epiphany 2022  
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish  
Father Craig Looney  
*St. John 2.1-11*



Did Jesus have a social life? If today's Gospel is any indication...the answer is yes!

The Wedding Feast in Cana took place shortly after Jesus was baptized, spent time in the desert and called his disciples. We are not told who was getting married...but there is a tantalizing clue at the beginning of the Gospel...Jesus' mother appears first in the list of invited guests in her group. The Gospel goes on to say..."and Jesus and his disciples were also invited." Notably absent from the festivities...Joseph.

It is possible one of Mary's relatives was getting married. Hospitality was an important aspect of Jewish social life and should be part of ours. Mary and her relatives would have been embarrassed and seemed inhospitable if there was no wine left. This would have given Mary every reason to tell Jesus their hosts were out of wine.

Jesus' reply..."You must not tell me what to do; my time has not yet come"...seems harsh and disrespectful of his mother. It actually isn't. Jesus is using a common way of addressing his mother. She would not have been offended and understood what Jesus was saying. She tells the waiters to do whatever Jesus tells them.

There is a human-interest side of the story. The Gospel account of Jesus being invited to the wedding, attending, and using his divine power to save the day for all who were there, is clear evidence he approves of marriage and the reception. Jesus' presence at the Wedding Feast in Cana is also the best argument against demonizing alcohol. Like all of God's gifts...it can be misused.

In the Prayer Book Liturgy for Holy Matrimony we acknowledge Marriage is "an honourable estate, instituted of God, signifying the mystical union between Christ and his Church, which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee." Marriage between a man and a woman is a good thing and to be celebrated...so is the Reception afterward.

Saint John the Evangelist is the only Gospel writer who records the Wedding in Cana...and for him it is a significant moment for Jesus and those at the wedding reception. It is an epiphany...a striking appearance...at which Jesus chose to perform his first miracle...changing water into wine.

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 was human too.

John attaches much symbolism to Jesus changing 120 gallons of water into the equivalent of \$2,000/bottle Chateau Lafite Rothschild...much better than \$1.00/bottle Ripple. By the way...an unopened bottle of Ripple...now quite rare...goes for around \$200!

John regards Jesus as the one who brings good news and hope to the world. He is the one who makes all of the prophecies about the coming Messiah come true. Jesus himself is the "good wine"...Jesus is the "best wine"...there is none better!

Jesus chose Cana in Galilee as the scene of his first miracle. Galilee is Gentile territory. He will later return to Cana to heal a Roman official's son. The two miracles are the first of "seven signs" in John's Gospel...the proof Jesus is who he claims to be...God's Son. God's power to transform lives has no borders.

The Wedding Feast in Cana looks forward to the Great Wedding Feast between Christ and his Church in heaven. The Mass is our direct earthly experience of heaven. At every Mass we receive something better than we start with. Through the Celebrant's actions and using Jesus' own words...ordinary bread and wine become for us Christ's Body and Blood. The Mass is an epiphany like nothing else.

Jesus revealed his glory to his disciples in the miracle in Cana...and they believed. He reveals himself to us in the miracle of Word and Sacrament...and through our coffee and fellowship time. And we too have seen...and believe!

