

III Epiphany 2024
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish
Father Craig Looney
Romans 12.16-21 St. John 2.1-11



Everyone is having a good time at the wedding reception. Mary is an honored guest and Jesus and his friends were also invited. There is music and dancing. Then the unthinkable happened...no more wine! It was the wedding host's worst nightmare. He would be humiliated and embarrassed in the small town of Cana. What was he to do?

When Mary becomes aware of the host's predicament she asks Jesus to do something. His answer in the KJV language of the Prayer Book..."Woman, what have I to do with thee. Mine hour has not yet come"...makes it seem like Jesus is being disrespectful of his mother. The GNB translation isn't much better...Jesus says to his mother, "You must not tell me what to do. My time has not yet come."

Jesus is actually addressing his mother in the common speak of the day. He is really saying, "Yes, mom, I know, but it's not the right time for me to take action". Mary might have nodded and smiled at Jesus, and then told the waiters to do whatever he said. And they did.

They filled six 30-gallon pots with water and following Jesus' instructions brought a glass to the wedding host. It wasn't water he tasted...it was the best wine ever. Jesus replaced the cheap Ripple wine that had flowing at the beginning of the wedding reception, with over-the-top, God-vintage, Chateau-Lafite Rothschild.

The Wedding at Cana is the first miracle Jesus performed and is the beginning of his ministry in Galilee. It is a public "epiphany" that would continue to make itself known in the words and actions of Jesus throughout his life...culminating in his passion, death and resurrection.

There is another "epiphany" in the Wedding at Cana. Jesus went to the wedding and reception with his mother and disciples. In doing so, Jesus shows us he approves of marriage. By changing water into the best wine ever, he shows his power of nature...God power. And he approves of the wedding guests having a good time at the reception.

What Jesus did at the Wedding at Cana was give the guests something much better than they started with. Ordinary wine was replaced by water turned into the best wine ever. Jesus gives us something better than what we started with at every Mass...the gift of himself in the Sacrament of the Altar. Ordinary bread and wine become for us his Body and Blood.

The Gospel concludes that his disciples believed on him, perhaps because they had just seen him perform a miracle and knew it was more than some magic trick, or perhaps because they sensed they needed to follow Jesus and come to know him better. Jesus wants us to believe in him and follow him too.

When we follow Jesus it means we want to try to act in the same way he would. In the Epistle lesson last week, Paul asked us to behave in ways that give glory to God and are in the best interests of others. What he was asking us to do is put into practice the Great Commandment: Love God above everything else; love others as we want to be loved.

This week Paul continues his lesson about applying LOVE in our lives. If we pay attention to what Paul is saying, we will begin to understand our LOVE actions are "epiphanies"...showings of who and what we are...Church...those who have been called to follow Jesus:

- We must not be proud; we should gratefully accept humble duties
- If someone has done us wrong, we must not repay him with a wrong
- We must try to live in peace to the best of our ability
- We must never take revenge on someone; God's justice will prevail in the end
- We must be as nice as we possibly can to our enemies; it will drive them crazy
- We must overcome evil with good

We must always do what's best for others...we must always act out of LOVE...because that's what Jesus did for the wedding guests at Cana...and that's what he continues to do for us today.

