

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Prophet speaks the divinely given Word, which alerts his hearers to two different times: the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God. They are not unrelated, but they are different. When the fist comes, the second is not far behind.

At Cana, with the first of the miracles the Lord worked after His baptism, the sign showed that the acceptable year of the Lord had come. Thanks be to God for that. Which means the day of vengeance comes soon. Faith thanks God for that as well.

The acceptable year of the Lord ushers in the beginnings of the new creation. Where God dwells among His people what is wrong is made right, what is broken is restored. When Christ walked among men a simple touch brought healing, a Word brought life to the dead. He blessed, He healed, He restored, He cleansed, He forgave sins. The acceptable year of the Lord had come.

St. John describes events that would otherwise be quite normal - on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Both the Lord and His disciples were invited to the wedding. Weddings regularly happen among us, families are usually invited. But at Cana, what is regular for fallen men, what is usual in this world, was eclipsed by something irregular, something unusual, something supernatural, by something men cannot do, by a sign that the acceptable year of the Lord had begun.

They were out of wine. Mary saw a need. Faith brings needs, trials, tribulations, hardships, hurts, sicknesses, doubts and struggles to Christ, Mary's Son. That's what she did. From the things treasured up in her heart, she brought out trust, and sought help in the only One worthy of our trust, God's Son. She did it believing that He would provide.

Her faith received its reward, but not in the way she expected. Faith is like that. God is like that. He hears your prayer. He answers your prayer in the way that is best for your salvation, not necessarily in the way you expect Him to.

She sought His help. His answer seems to us to be a bit terse: "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me?" But He explains. His hour had not yet come. While His Holy Incarnation brought with it the acceptable year of the Lord, there would be an hour, an hour yet to come, in which the greatest redemptive act of all time and eternity would occur.

Mary had simply said "They have no wine." But it was also true that they had no holiness. They had no forgiveness. They had no righteousness. They had no access to heaven. The hour to which the Lord referred as "My hour" would bring an answer to everything they lacked, to everything that you lack.

That bloody hour would come, that hour of suffering and death. For that He took on Flesh. For that He was sent by the Father. For that He came. And although when Mary asked for wine that hour was yet to come, at the wedding He miraculously honors His mother's request. She asked for wine, He gave much more.

The Beloved Disciple explains that the six stone waterpots were there according to the manner of purification of the Jews. The one who is clean doesn't need to wash. The waterpots were a

monument to man's uncleanness. They testified to the irrefutable fact that man needs purification, which is to say that man is impure. Man was unacceptable to God. And although the Law demanded that the Jews wash, the water from stone waterpots could not truly make them clean.

Nor was the uncleanness, the impurity, the unacceptableness limited to the Jews. Every man born of human father suffers from the same affliction. And every man born of human father is rightly then, under the same just curse. So the waterpots condemned everyone who walked in front of them. But their water could not truly cleanse.

It is those very pots that the Lord fills to the brim. He fills them not with water, for He is not a new lawgiver. He does not direct the wedding guests to the Old. He comes to make all things new. He ushers in the New. He fills the old with the new, with the best, with wine, a sign of the long-promised New Testament. He fills them to the top, completely. And that is how He fulfills the Law for you.

He did it by bringing a Divine cleanness, a Divine purity, a perfect holiness, into the same flesh you wear. He did it by a miraculous conception without an earthly father. He did it by a miraculous birth by which God dwelt among men. He did it by His perfect keeping of the Law, by His flawless, holy, active and passive obedience, by which He fulfilled not the stone waterpots, but the stone tablets of the Law, for you.

Owing no debt, committing no trespass, being perfectly just and righteous, He took upon Himself your sins. He was covered in unholiness, in imperfection, in uncleanness and impurity. He made Himself unacceptable in God's eyes, the greatest transgressor that ever lived. And those sins, your sins, your uncleanness, your doubt, your impurity, your unacceptableness, He died for. He paid the price. He fulfilled the Law. He satisfied the Law. He filled it to the brim.

And then from that stony void, not of the waterpots, but of the garden tomb, He brought forth a miracle greater than Cana's wine: He rose to new life. While the miracle at Cana was one of filling, the greatest miracle is one of emptying – He emptied the tomb. He conquered sin. He put death to death. He left your sins buried for all eternity. And He brings to you, from that empty stone container, a miraculous new life in the New and better Testament that He instituted.

At Cana, the Lord blessed the wedding by His presence. So it is that Christian weddings are blessed, for bride and groom are united before God. But earthly marriages are valid only until physical death. For you, the Lord makes Himself the true Bridegroom, and His Holy Church His Bride, that you be His for eternity.

Mary, in faith, told the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." That's what faith does. Faith does what Christ commands. And so does your faith say the same. For your salvation the true Bridegroom instituted a better washing, a washing that truly cleanses. And so by the water of that stone vessel you are made an heir of the New Testament, an heir of the riches of heaven.

"Whatever He says to you, do it." That's what faith does. So when your Lord says "This do in remembrance of Me", you feast on the Divine Meal your Bridegroom brings. You eat His Body and drink His Blood. It is a miracle greater than Cana, for in this miracle the Lord fills the Chalice

with His Blood. And although the master of the Feast at Cana did not know where the miraculous wine had come from, you, the servants of the True Bridegroom, do know – from the pierced side of your Lord, who on the third day showed Himself to be your Life, your Redeemer, your Savior, your Bridegroom.

And for you, He has kept the best wine until now.

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