



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time-Year C-January 20th 2019

Readings: Isaiah 62: 1-5, Psalm 95, 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11, John 2: 1-11

If you ask children which miracle they remember best the answer you get most often is the 'Feeding of the Five Thousand'. There is something endlessly fascinating to children about the concept of limitless grub. If you ask adults the same question they usually ship up with the 'Wedding at Cana' because of its wholly implausible excess and its claim to be the biggest 'booze up' in Scripture. Adults, after all, are mostly big children. If I had a pound for every pub jester who has asked if I could turn water into wine or, just like the rest of them, my talent was restricted to the opposite process, I would be a rich man. The miracle of Cana was and is important for much more profound reasons. It is no accident that St. John records it as Christ's first miracle and, when expanding the meditations of the Rosary, St. John Paul II included it as the pivotal point of the Mysteries of Light.

There is a wedding. Whose we are not told. Various commentators, over the centuries, have speculated as to who the happy couple might be. Nathaniel, recently met by Jesus and from Cana? St. John himself who includes this bit of his own story? Jesus marriage to Mary Magdalen, the latest nonsense from modern heretics. That can be dismissed by Jesus

initial indifference to the catering crisis if nothing else. Coptic tradition suggests the groom was a son of one of Mary's sisters. That is the most plausible because it would explain Mary's position at the head of the guest list and her deep concern for the potential failure of hospitality. Whatever the truth, it is of little consequence. What matters to St. John is that this wedding takes place in the context of THE WEDDING. The Wedding is the Wedding of Heaven and Earth in Jesus Christ Himself. It is the wedding of God and Man in the Incarnation.

The time frame is also a clue. It takes place on the Third Day. This reflects the Genesis creation order as the day when life begins to emerge as the waters are ordered as they will be in rite of baptism. It alludes directly to the miracle of the Third Day which is the Resurrection when life eternal is restored in Christ and is offered, in baptism, to all who will follow Him. The crisis of human inadequacy unfolds. The wine of the Feast is failing, the shame of man's fragile hospitality is exposed. Only God's bounty can supply our insufficiency.

Mary turns to Jesus. Mary intercedes. A task that she will carry out for her children until the end of time. Jesus' response is not promising. The actual translation is: 'Woman. What is that to you or me?' 'Woman' here is not some patriarchal put down, 'Woman, bring my slippers'. It is addressing His Mother as THE WOMAN, the new Eve, the mother of all who will live. It is the same title he affords her from the Cross when He commits Mary and the beloved disciple to each other as mother and son. Mary does not argue the point but simply proceeds as if her Son is going to respond positively. Have interceded, she proceeds in faith. And then she gives us the very motto of the Church: 'Do whatever He tells you' This is Our Lady's message to the faithful of all ages. She who was obedient to God and brought forth Christ, exhorts the servants to do likewise if we are to witness the transformation of the miracle.

Jesus commands them to fill the purification jars with water. These jars are for ritual washing. They sign the six days of the creation and prefigure the waters of baptism. He then tells them to take this water to the distraught wineless steward. This is, in itself, a great act of faith. Imagine the stewards reaction to servants offering him water. Once again obedience is the key. In the miracle of Christ's command and his servants' obedience, the water is transformed into wine – 180 gallons of it. The water of purification becomes, through Jesus, the wine of the feast. Just as the waters of baptism, repentance, purification, will lead us, through obedience, to the chalice of everlasting salvation and the wine of the Eucharistic feast, the Blood of Christ. In this short account of the first miracle we learn who Christ is – the wedding of heaven and Earth, the co-inherence of God and Man. We see the tragedy of Man, his failure, inadequacy and the crisis of his shortcomings. We see the intercession of Our Lady. We see Mary as the Woman, the mother of the Church. We learn obedience from her and obedience to her Son- Do whatever He tells you. We learn, by obedience and against all the odds, that Christ will transform what is offered. We understand the link between the waters of purification in the fountain of baptism and the wine of the feast in the Blood of the Sacrifice. The journey from the font to the altar is but a few steps. The journey from the font to the altar is the pilgrimage of our lifetime. All these great mysteries of Christ are hidden and revealed in this first miracle where, St. John tells us, He let His glory be seen.