

In the Name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Dearly loved in Christ:

It is no accident that Our Lord's first miracle takes place at a wedding. For Our Lord God instituted the holy estate of matrimony. And He did so both to demonstrate and to complete in us the same desire for a spouse that He has for us. *For how does it happen that Adam is married to Eve? Is it not because the Lord Himself says, “It is not good that man should be alone”?*

Behind that question lurks the motive that impelled God to create us. For the desire to share His life, His love, His Self so intimately with us is what moves Our Lord to make us. And not only to create us, but to plant in us that same desire—to share our life, our love, our self intimately with each other. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the marriage of a man and a woman. But the marriage is not the chief thing. The chief thing is that every marriage is a picture, an image of the deep-seated love that your Maker and Redeemer has for you. So when you see a wedding, and when you see a married couple, and when you see the unique love between a husband and wife—then you see a living example of the communion all mankind individually and collectively share in God through Christ Jesus.

Our fall into sin has perverted this love for God and others. And so, among other things, our sin has desecrated the holy institution of matrimony. Now we've got it in our heads that we can go from wife to wife, or that we can live the married life without the Lord's blessing, or that we can invent the abomination of homosexual marriages.

Such things are repulsive, not because they offend our morals and values, but because they reveal our innate idolatry and manifest our hatred for true communion in God. For so often we insist that God relate to us according to our conditions, our demands, our desires. And chief among those desires is that God submit to us, that He becomes our helper and servant, that He is subject to us and obeys us so that our name is hallowed, our fanciful kingdom comes, and our selfish will is done. And so now we've set about to outdo Eve. For she simply wanted to be like God, knowing good and evil. But we believe that it is our right, in fact our duty, to be God—to determine what is good and what is evil. So it should not surprise us when we ourselves reward good with evil, and when hatred and anger is so much stronger in us than love and mercy, kindness and compassion.

Yet Our Lord still deals with us as the loving and faithful husband who constantly takes back his adulterous, unbearable wife. We would say that such a husband should give up and move on because he's doing nothing but making his own life miserable. But fortunately for us, Our Lord does not think or act as we do. Instead, He insists that He is our life, and that He has no other desire than to share His whole Self with us, and live His Life in us. And He constantly declares that He is hopelessly and steadfastly and unwaveringly in love with us. So while we continually prefer other husbands, other gods; and even while we pursue distorted kinds of intimacy and lurid relationships with lovers other than our one true love; and even though we seek to gratify our self love and immoral communions, the Lord steadfastly remains determined to prefer us, to win us back to Himself, and to shower us with His love—no matter how much abuse and ridicule and meanness and unfaithfulness He must endure from our hands, our mouths and our bodies.

So, in today's Gospel, what we see most of all is not Jesus proving He can do something spectacular. What the Spirit really wants us to see and understand is the Faithful Husband shamelessly reaching out to, and pleading with, His disloyal, cheating wife. And He does so, first of all, at a wedding so that He might manifest and reveal His inmost desire—a restoration of the marriage, the love, the intimacy, and the unquenchable union between Himself and His Bride. St Paul says that Christ Jesus sought us out so that He might sanctify and cleanse us—to wash and baptize us by water and the word—so that He might once again present us as His glorious, unblemished, holy, spotless and pure bride. And in today's Gospel, we actually see that happening.

So what is significant in today's Gospel is not who's marrying whom. Otherwise, we would be told that. But St John doesn't bother us with the details of this marriage—who was getting married and why Our Lord was invited. Instead, the holy evangelist wants us to concentrate on Our Lord and His undying desire to win us back, to bring us home, to envelop us with His eternal love, and to steer us away from our self-loves and perversions by proving to us that He truly is the love of our life.

*And how will He prove this to us? Not by demands and threats. Not by empty promises or pitiable begging. But by sacrificing Himself. By laying down His life. By loving us to the end so that He saves not Himself, but us from ourselves. Isn't that the truest expression of love—not that we love ourselves, but that we are ready to die for those whom we love? And isn't that how Christ loved His church—not by doing what was in His best interest, but by taking our place, swallowing our sickness, suffering our temptations, dying our death, and descending into our hell?*

*What is the unparalleled symbol of Our Lord's love? Is it not the cross where He shed His blood? Yet if the cross is the symbol—the wedding ring—where is Our Lord's love truly given to us? Where is His embrace? And where can we know that His self-sacrifice is not self-love but true love? That is shown, or rather it is given, in the blood which flowed from His side, together with the water. For when the soldier pierced our dead Lord and God and opened His side, we saw not a picture but we received the fullness and the means of Our Lord's love.*

So do not wonder that Our Lord's first miracle is turning water into wine. For again, He's not doing that to show us He can, or to prove that He is the creator, or to get our attention. Our Lord changes water into wine so that we might see that He is the Husband who has come to reclaim His wayward bride, to take her back, and to restore and renew the intimacy, the love, and the communion that we know firstly and chiefly in the holy sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. For at the Lord's Table Our Lord consummates His communion with you—and where He is for you the Husband that has no equal, and whose love will not be quenched.

So Our Lord goes to this wedding and performs this miracle to manifest to us His glory so that we might believe that He truly is our life, our love, our hope and our true desire. And by doing so, with the water into wine, He points us to His cross and this altar where He nourishes and cherishes us. For here, in this sacrament of His love, we are united in Him. And by it the two—Him and us—become one flesh; and we are members of His body— of His flesh and of His bones. This is a great mystery. Yet it is also our life and our salvation.

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