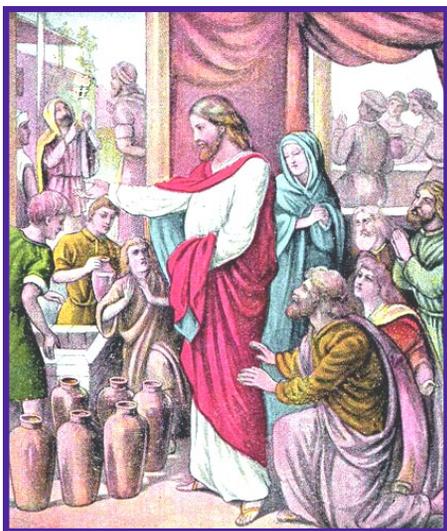


bears out: *He will strike and He will cure us. He will revive us after two days: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. We shall know, and we shall follow on, that we may know the Lord. His going forth is prepared in the morning light* (Osee vi. 3).

For He struck us because of Adam's sin, saying: *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return* (Gen. iii. 19). But on the third day He healed those who were stricken with corruption and death, not in the first age, nor in the middle, but in these last times; when becoming man, He restored all human nature, raising it in Himself from the dead. He is called *the first fruits of them that sleep* (I Cor. xv. 20), for when the Evangelists speaks of *the third day*, upon which was celebrated the wedding feast, he means this present age.

The event takes place in the village of Cana in Galilee and not in Jerusalem, but outside Judea, in the country of the Gentiles as the prophet says (Mt. iv. 15). For the Synagogue of the Jews had rejected the heavenly Bridegroom: but by the Church of the Gentiles He was received with a joyful heart.

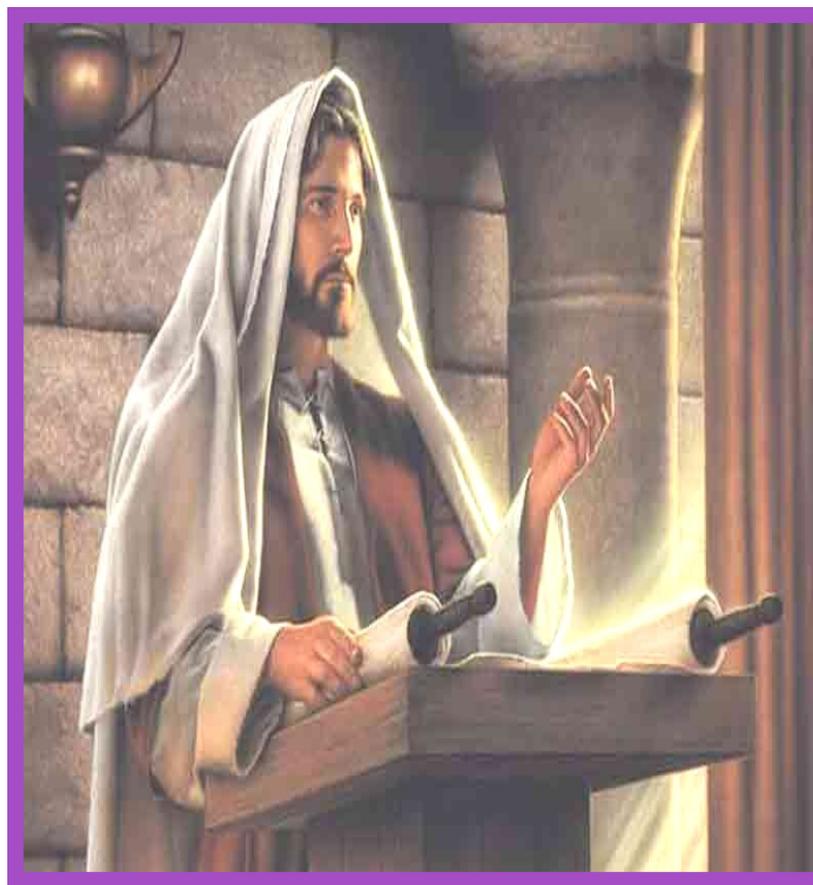


The Savior came to the wedding feast as one besought by the multitudes of the voices of the saints. *For the Law brought nothing to perfection* (Heb. vii. 19); the Mosaic code did not suffice for Perfect happiness... The Law had no completeness in good things; but the teaching of the Gospel has in it the fullness of every blessing...



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SERMON ON THE WEDDING FEAST IN CANA FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH # 134 - 1



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

Volume 1 - Pages 1370 - 1371 (1962 edition)

Commentary on the Gospel of John 2: 1-11

by: Saint Cyril, Bishop and Doctor

At an opportune time does Christ go there to perform a miracle; though it seems as though he were invited by chance. Since the festivities would be celebrated modestly and becomingly, the Mother of the Savior is present; He also, being invited, came, and with Him His Disciples. He came, not so much to partake of the wedding feast, as to perform His miracle, so that He might sanctify the beginning of human generation in that which pertains to the flesh. It was but fitting that He Who was about to restore the nature itself of man, and bring it wholly to a better state, should give His blessing, not alone to those already born, but also prepare a blessing for those who were afterwards to be born, sanctifying their coming into this world.

There is also a third reason; it had elsewhere been said by God to man: *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children* (Gen. iii. 16). How is this curse to be lifted, or for what reason was it to be lawful to avoid the nuptials that was thus condemned? The Savior, most Beloved of men, has solved our difficulty. By His Presence He sanctified marriage, and He Who is the Joy and the Delight of all men, has taken away the ancient sadness of childbearing. *If there be in Christ a new creature, the old things are passed away, as Paul says, and behold all things are made new* (II Cor. v. 17).

He comes therefore to the wedding feast, and His Disciples with Him. It was fitting that they should be present while He performed these wonders, who were to keep in their minds the significance of these wonders, gathering up as food for their faith that which was now about to be done. The wine for the guests giving out, His Mother asks, desiring Him, that He use His wonted goodness and kindness, saying: *They have no wine*. For since it was in His power to do all things whatsoever He wished, she urges Him to perform a miracle. Jesus said to her: *Woman, What is that to me, and to thee? My hour is not yet come*.

His Mother said to the waiters... The Woman, having, as was fitting, great authority over the Lord, Her Son, persuades Him to work a miracle. She also prepares the way for it, bidding the waiters of the feast to be at hand, and to have prepared that which the Lord will presently command.

Jesus saith to them... The waiters fulfill His requests. With ineffable power He changes the water into wine. For what is there difficult to the Omnipotent? He Who calls things from nothingness into being, how could it be difficult to change what was made into what He willed? They wonder, as at something extraordinary. But not otherwise could that be which was done by Christ. And the Chief steward chides the bridegroom, not ungracefully, if the order of what has taken place be considered: because he gives out the better wine as the supper comes to an end.

Many things are prefigured at the same time by this singular and earliest sign. For honest nuptials are sanctified, and the curse that was laid on womankind is taken away. No more shall she bring forth children in sorrow, since Christ has placed His Blessing on the beginning of human generation. The Savior's glory shines as the light of the sun, and His Disciples' faith is confirmed in the wonder of these things. This will suffice as regards the history of this account for the purpose of contemplation, another aspect must be considered, and we must point out what is meant by these happenings.

The word of God has come down from the heavens, as He has elsewhere said (Jn. vi. 28), so that as a Spouse He might persuade the nature which He united with Himself, that it be filled with the seed of wisdom. Humanity is called a bride, and the Savior the Bridegroom; divine Scripture thus taking images from the likeness of nature, to raise us to the higher understanding of that which He said.

The nuptials are celebrated on *the third day*, that is, in the last age of the world. For the ternary number signifies for us a beginning, a middle, and an end. This the prophetic speech