

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God
John 1:1

But there are also many other things which Jesus did; - were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.
John 21:25

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost +

The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end this is the message of John's Gospel. The quotes are from the first verse and the last verse of his Gospel. The Synoptic Gospels are intended to reveal to us a particular understanding of Jesus and how that group of people, the Jews the Gentiles those who are dispersed throughout the Roman Empire with no particular religious experience may understand Jesus to be the Son of God and the Savior of all mankind. John's Gospel is unique and if possible even more universal.

John does not speak of miracles, but rather of signs. These signs are to point us towards the truth. They are in many cases the same miracles proclaimed in the other Gospels, but this particular understanding of the role miracles play in the self revealing of God belongs to John. Let us for a minute consider the nature of signs. What do they do and how do we react to them?

We read the road sign that says three miles to our destination and we are happy the trip is almost at an end. We see dark thick clouds in the sky and feel the wind quicken and grow colder. These signs indicate a storm is coming and we take the appropriate action. Even our bodies give us signs. Hunger, thirst or pain all indicate to us a condition which needs to be addressed in some fashion.

Signs then inform us so that we can gain understanding or indicate some action or activity in which we must engage.

What do the signs in the Gospel of John indicate? What understanding are we to gain and what actions are we take?

At the Wedding at Cana there are several different things going on simultaneously. But there is but one sign. The activity which we are allowed to observe and that which John believed was important enough to be included in his Gospel also takes place on several different levels so that we can examine the events and with each observation come to the same conclusion.

The wine has run out, Mary, the Mother of the Lord, instructs the servants to do whatever He tells you. Jesus first makes what is almost a theatrical aside to Mary "What has this to do with me, my hour has not yet come" and thus we are reminded of the Last Supper and the Passion that is to come.

Jesus has the servants fill the vessels used for purification with water and then instructs them to take the vessels to the steward. The old rites and ritual still exist as do the vessels used for them, but their function is changed and the new rite is revealed. The water becomes wine and not just that inexpensive box wine, but wine of the finest vintage. What are we to make of all of this?

The actions of the Blessed Mother instruct us of faith and trust. And the faith of Mary is not just faith that she holds in her heart, but a faith which is expressed in action. Her faith is in Jesus, who is the Son of God, she trusts that whatever He will do, will be the right thing.

The servants when instructed respond, even when the instructions do not make sense. They move away from the rigid understandings and habits into a new structure of belief and faith. They have witnessed the faith of the Blessed Mother and now begin to trust that what Jesus is telling them is the proper thing to do.

It is important for us to understand that at this point that Jesus has not told the servants that he is going to turn the water into wine.

He has only told them to fill the vessels and then take them to the steward. This is an exhibition of faith based not on having witnessed an event or other foreknowledge, but faith based on sharing the faith of another. In this case Mary's faith has been shared with the servants and they obey the command of Jesus.

The steward is the next to witness the sign. This wonderful wine should have been consumed first.....But that is not what our lives are about. Today in the here and now we are consumed with the day to day trials and tests of faith (The ordinary wine). One day at the end of our earthly existence we will taste the sweetness of the finest wine, when we shall sit at the table with Jesus.

Underlying all of this is the eternal and cosmic sign that we should also ponder. These signs all point us toward the understanding that Jesus is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God.

The Lord God almighty created all that is and all that will be. It was He that caused the waters to first fall from the heavens and created all living things. It is God who gives us water, the grapes which grown in His soil, absorb His water and created the microbes which cause the fermentation that allows grapes to become wine.

Not only at Cana of Galilee but everywhere in the world today, tomorrow and for as long as it is God good Will and Purpose that this world exist. God will cause crops to grow, animals and humans to produce and reproduce. It is He that will cause the winds to blow and the stars to shine. And O yes, to change water into wine.

The Cosmic Eternal Sign - Jesus in changing water to wine was only doing what God does every day and what only God can do.

Amen