

The First Sign

John 2

What We Found

The new-creation pattern many readers see running through John 1 and 2 ended where the first creation week did, with a man and a woman, this time at a wedding. Mary's two sentences gave us the whole anatomy of intercession: they have no wine, presenting the need without instructions, and do whatever he tells you, her last recorded words in Scripture, aimed entirely at her Son. We weighed the hard verse honestly, O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come, and found that whatever distance it carries, the story refuses to read it as a refusal: Mary mobilizes the servants, and Jesus pours out the miracle.

We did the math on the six stone jars: one hundred twenty to one hundred eighty gallons, and not of just any water, but the water of the old purification rites, transformed into wine that evokes the messianic feast Isaiah 25 promised. John calls it the first of his signs, and we started our running tally. Then, at Passover, Jesus claimed the temple as my Father's house and answered the demand for credentials with a riddle: destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. John gave us the key the crowd lacked: he spoke of the temple of his body. The dwelling of God among us keeps narrowing: a tent, a ladder, and now a body.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Augustine of Hippo, Tractates on the Gospel of John, Tractate 8

The one who made wine that day in the six jars does the same thing every year in the vines: water from the sky becomes wine by way of the vine, and no one marvels, because it happens annually. Cana is creation's ordinary wonder compressed into a moment, so that our dulled attention would finally notice who has been doing it all along.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies 3.22.4

Irenaeus, who learned from Polycarp, a hearer of John, draws the great parallel: the knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience. What the virgin Eve bound through unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosed through faith. At Cana that obedient faith speaks its whole rule of life in five words: do whatever he tells you.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on the Gospel of John, on chapter 2

Aquinas reads Cana as a portrait of Mary's intercession: she notices the need before anyone asks, brings it to her Son with total confidence, and presumes nothing about method or timing. Mercy sees that the wine has failed; faith knows exactly where to take the problem.

Live It This Week

- **Pray Cana-style.** Once a day, bring one need to Jesus in Mary's grammar: no instructions, no proposed solutions, just they have no wine, and trust. If you pray with Mary, ask her to present it with you.
- **One act of whatever.** Pick one thing you already know he is telling you to do, the one you have been deferring, and do it this week. Do whatever he tells you begins with the whatever you already know.
- **Watch the water.** At Mass this Sunday, watch the priest add a little water to the wine in the chalice, and remember the six jars. Ordinary matter, an ordinary hour, and glory arriving quietly through it: that is Cana, and it lights up the whole sacramental principle.

Memory Verse

John 2:5 (RSV2CE)

His mother said to the servants, Do whatever he tells you.

Before Next Session

Read John 3. Session 4: Born of Water and the Spirit. Keep your sign tally going, and keep your guess sealed.

Catechism References

CCC 547-548, 586, 1613, 2618.