

Well today's Gospel is the story of the Wedding Feast at Cana in which our Lord Jesus inaugurates His public ministry with His first miracle of changing water into wine for some unidentified newly-weds and their guests. I mean can you imagine, this poor newly-wed couple having to deal with this emergency at their wedding reception of running out of wine, which was essentially a staple drink at the time? That must've been extremely embarrassing and nerve-wracking for them.

Even the fact that they ran out of wine, means everyone must've been having a really good time! So upon hearing this, our Blessed Mother Mary, out of her love and concern for the newly-weds and their guests, intervenes and goes directly to her Son Jesus, because she knows Who He is and she knows the depths of His love and divine power!

Now when we hear our Lord's response to Mary's request to help: "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come," we tend to get all uncomfortable because to our modern ears we think that Christ is being disrespectful to His own mother by addressing her as "Woman." ***But He's not!*** And so we shouldn't interpret this as something derogatory and rude. No, in fact, the exact opposite is going

on given that at the time of Christ, addressing a female as “woman” was actually an expression of respect and endearment.

Moreover, by Jesus calling His mother Mary, “Woman,” He’s actually referring to Her as the “New Eve” in that the first Eve in the Garden of Eden was also addressed by God as “woman” if you go back to the Book of Genesis. And so Jesus is emphasizing the parallel between the first Eve in the Garden of Eden and Mary, His Mother, Who is the New Eve. Just as sin and death entered the world through *Eve’s disobedience* in the Garden of Eden, so grace and salvation have entered the world through *Mary’s perfect obedience* to the will of God.

So the response of Jesus to His mother is rather a respectful, rhetorical question in which our Lord knows deeply the great faith and loving confidence His Mother has in Him. And so our Lord Jesus, sharing His Mother’s loving concern for the newly-weds and their guests, complies with Mary’s faith-filled request. He instructs the servers to fill 6 stone jars with water, which if you heard in the Gospel, each jar can hold 20-30 gallons and so if you do the math, those jars would hold between 120-180 gallons of new wine. That’s a lot of wine

folks! So if anyone's wondering, Jesus is obviously no "Puritan" and hopefully, you know that as Catholics, we're certainly not the "Taliban" when it comes to alcohol. Now we obviously shouldn't *abuse alcohol*, but I digress.

The point is that the sheer amount of wine that our Lord Jesus provides for the wedding reception is an example of His abundant generosity, which springs from His infinite love and mercy. And the large amount of wine makes perfect sense within the historical context, because at the time of Christ, Jewish weddings could be celebrated for an entire week or more! Now that's my kinda party!

So there is so much going on in this theologically rich Gospel account, but I want to return to the powerful words of our Blessed Mother Mary—the words that she uses to instruct the wedding servers when Christ is about to perform His first miracle: "*Do whatever He tells you.*" These words of the Blessed Mother are her last recorded words in the New Testament and her only recorded words in John's Gospel. Now if these words were the *only* recorded words of Mary in all of the Gospels, *then so be it*, because these 5 words perfectly describe Mary's

pivotal role, not only in salvation history, but in *our salvation*: “***Do whatever He tells you.***”

It is so fitting that the greatest and most perfect disciple of Christ, His own Mother, should speak these words to us, because Mary teaches us *how* to follow Her Son. She shows us what it means to be one of His faithful disciples—properly understood, our Blessed Mother Mary is not a distraction from Jesus, but rather she *always leads us* to Her Son and *points to Him!* Because of her great faith and humble submission to God’s will, Mary is the perfect model of Christian discipleship!

With these powerful words, “***Do whatever He tells you,***” our Blessed Mother reminds us of the most fundamental principle of Christian discipleship, which is that as followers of Jesus, we are called to conform our entire lives to Christ and His Church! As *His* disciples, we’re not supposed to have Christ conform to *our* lives! Jesus is not *our disciple*. In other words, I’m called to humbly conform my entire life *to Christ and His Church* and *not* have Christ and His Church conform to *me*: to my selfishness, my sinfulness, my political or ideological agenda, etc.

Brothers and sisters, our Catholic faith is not rooted in self-deluded wishful thinking or in public opinion polls, but rather it's rooted in our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church, which ***He established*** to teach, govern, and sanctify us—to help us, to heal us, to guide us in the midst of this challenging world.

And so the instruction “Do whatever He tells you” implies two things on our part: 1) ***Listening to Jesus*** and ***then 2) Acting upon and doing whatever He tells us***. Now, discerning the will of God in our life can sometimes be difficult, but if we know where to find His voice and how to listen with the ears of faith, then we can know what He wants us to do. The Son of God is certainly not restricted in how He can communicate with us, yet the best and most certain ways we hear His voice is through prayer, the sacraments, the mass, reading His inspired Word in Sacred Scripture, and especially ***through His*** Catholic Church. In the Gospel of Luke, speaking to His disciples, upon whom Christ established His Church, He declared, ***“Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”***

Brothers and sisters, the instructions Mary gave us today: “Do whatever He tells you”—it’s all about the will of God. *If we only knew what God wanted for us and acted upon it! If we only knew what God wanted to give us, what He has already given us!* The second reading today from St. Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians speaks about all of the gifts and talents that God has already given to us and wants to give us so that we can lovingly serve Him and others. God’s will for us is to love with a pure heart and to truly be happy, free, and at peace, *even in the midst of great suffering!* In the first reading today from Isaiah, we hear the reassuring voice of Christ say to us: “You shall be called my delight! For the Lord delights in you! And just as a bridegroom rejoices in His bride, so shall your God rejoice in you!”

As we prepare to encounter our Lord Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist, let’s ask him for the grace to be faithful and humble disciples like His Mother Mary, so that *like her*, we may *listen to Him* and *do His will* in every aspect of our lives.