

Do Whatever He Tells You

The Question of What to Bring

In the prophet Micah, we hear a voice echoing across centuries, asking the fundamental human question of faith: "*With what gift shall I come into Yahweh's presence and bow down before God on high?*"

It is an understandable instinct to think that God requires grand, extraordinary displays. We imagine that to draw near to the Divine, we must bring thousands of rams, torrents of oil, or perform heroic feats of spiritual labor. We search for complex offerings to prove our devotion.

Yet Micah cuts through all our elaborate preparations with stunning clarity: "This is what Yahweh asks of you; only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God."

God does not demand the impossible or the extravagant. God asks for an open heart, grounded in the quiet, daily practices of justice, tenderness, and humility. And nowhere in Holy Scripture do we see these three virtues so beautifully lived out as at a wedding feast in Galilee.

The Attentive Heart at Cana

At the wedding in Cana, an ordinary human crisis arises: *they have no wine*.

In first-century Palestine, running out of wine at a wedding feast was not merely a minor inconvenience; it was a deep social embarrassment for the host family. But amidst the music, the laughter, and the bustle of the celebration, Mary notices.

Notice how Mary operates. She does not cause a scene. She does not criticize the hosts for their lack of foresight. Her attentiveness is steeped in *tenderness*. She sees human need before it becomes an overt disaster, and she simply brings that need to her Son: "They have no wine."

This is the essence of walking humbly. Mary does not attempt to engineer the miracle herself, nor does she dictate to Jesus how he ought to fix the situation. When Jesus responds that his hour has not yet come, she does not argue. Instead, she turns to the servants with absolute trust and offers the final recorded words she speaks in the Gospel of John: "Do whatever he tells you."

In those five words, Mary encapsulates the entire spiritual life. She directs our gaze away from herself and points us squarely toward Christ.

Filling the Stone Jars

Standing nearby were six stone water-jars used for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. They were heavy, ordinary, utilitarian vessels.

Jesus instructs the servants, "*Fill the jars with water.*" And John tells us they filled them to the brim.

How often do we hold back our ordinary "water"? We look at our limited talents, our weary spirits, or our small, unremarkable days, and we think, *This isn't enough for God. I must wait until I have wine to offer.*

But the miracle of Cana teaches us that Jesus does not ask us to produce the wine. He asks us to bring the water—our ordinary lives, our daily acts of obedience, our simple presence—and to fill those jars to the brim.

When we yield our humble offerings to Christ in obedience to Mary's counsel, the transformative power of grace takes over. The water of routine, dusty obligation is changed into the rich, abundant wine of divine joy and transformation.

Steadying Our Footsteps in the Word

The Psalmist prays: "*When your word goes forth it gives light... Steady my footsteps in your word.*"

Mary's life was a continuous steadying of her footsteps in God's word. From her first Yes at the Annunciation to her quiet presence at Cana and her standing at the foot of the Cross, her life was shaped by contemplative attentiveness. She listened, she observed, and she acted with tender courage.

As we reflect on these readings today, we are invited to ask ourselves:

- Where in our lives, our communities, or our world has the wine run out?
- Where are we being called to exercise *attentive tenderness* to notice the hidden needs of those around us?
- What ordinary "water" is Christ asking us to offer up today so that his glory may be revealed?

May we have the faith to bring our empty jars, our needs, and our ordinary gifts to God. And above all, may we hear the motherly voice of Mary guiding our hearts into quiet, trusting obedience: "*Do whatever he tells you.*"

Amen.