

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Text: St. John 2:1-11

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the Evangelist, begins *“In the beginning”* It begins with our LORD who was before *“the beginning”* in the person of CHRIST who is the Word of God incarnate, and who is Himself, God.

Thus, the Gospel is not an ending to the long history of our redemption and salvation. For the Gospel existed with CHRIST *“In the beginning.”* The Gospel is enfleshed in JESUS, and just as He is eternal, so, too, His Gospel is eternal. It is God’s eternal promise and the promise fulfilled. It is the alpha and omega such that it constitutes and establishes our entire relationship with God.

The point of *“this beginning of signs”* as John records for us, is the same as all our LORD JESUS’ signs—to create faith where there was none before—to reveal JESUS as *“the CHRIST, the SON of God,”* that we may believe, *“and believing, [we] may have life in His Name.”*

The echo of this account at the beginning of JESUS’ earthly ministry reverberates throughout St. John’s Gospel. It resounds within the account of JESUS’ Baptism by His cousin John who said, *“I saw the SPIRIT descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the SPIRIT descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the HOLY SPIRIT.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the SON of God.”*; at the calling of Nathanael, *“Nathanael answered and said to [JESUS], ‘Rabbi, You are the SON of God! You are the King of Israel!’”*; it is revealed in the account of JESUS’ cleansing of the temple, *And He said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My FATHER’s house a house of merchandise!”*; we hear it in JESUS’ discourse on living water with the Samaritan woman at the well, *“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that MESSIAH is coming’ (who is called CHRIST). When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ JESUS said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’”*; with Mary Magdalene at the tomb, *“JESUS said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My FATHER; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My FATHER and your FATHER, and to My God and your God.’”*; and with the doubting St. Thomas, *And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My LORD and my God!”*; we hear and see the echo of Cana in every one of the signs of JESUS.

This is the very purpose of St. John's Gospel: to establish the undeniable truth that JESUS, the SON of Mary, is first and foremost the only-begotten SON of the living God; indeed, that JESUS is God!

Therefore, the account of our LORD and the events that occurred at the wedding at Cana serve far more than to remind us, for example, that JESUS' presence at Cana serves to bless Holy Matrimony. Indeed, wherever our LORD is present with His grace and mercy, there also is His blessing. Yet, when we pay close attention to this account more significant things become apparent, not the least of which are the words, "*On the third day....*"

That Saint John chose to begin this account with these words is significant. They are significant, not simply as a connection to previous chronological events, if indeed, that is what Saint John intended, and I believe he did, but I also believe he intended through divine inspiration to connect this miracle at Cana to our salvation won on Calvary and made manifest on the third day, the day of our LORD's resurrection.

Therefore, John does not write, "*On Friday*" or any specific day of the week, nor does he write, "*On the next day,*" but "*On the third day....*" It is on the third day that JESUS manifested His glory as the only begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth. For this CHRIST, who existed before time, dwelt among us in the flesh of JESUS, fully human and fully God, uniting mortal man to immortal God, the transient to the eternal, the temporary to the timeless. JESUS CHRIST was, is, and always will be God with us!

Therefore, the miracle of Cana is not simply the beginning of signs; it is the chief sign revealing JESUS as the Word of God through whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made that has been made. For the changing of water into wine is a creative act signaling the recreation of all things broken in the fall of man. This miracle is the sign by which all other signs are to be measured because this miracle is the defining pattern for JESUS' entire ministry among us—His ministry of reconciliation and restoration between God and man—for JESUS has come to make all things new.

Therefore, let us not be like the master of the feast who criticizes the groom for putting out the good wine after the guests at the wedding feast have already become drunk. For JESUS, who is our Husband and the Bridegroom of the Church, pours out His Blood for sinners intoxicated with the pleasures of the flesh, who have become drunk on the promises of Satan, the world, and their own sinful desires. Mercy in the Blood of CHRIST fills our cups to overflowing. In this is the glory of the LORD. In this our LORD epiphanies Himself and shows forth His glory.

The glory of our LORD, JESUS CHRIST, is to lift deplorable derelicts and rebellious reprobates, such as were you and I, out of the gutter and dress them in spotless wedding

garments that shine brighter than the sun. He comes bringing healing and forgiveness for the lowest of the low, showing mercy when what we truly deserve is punishment for our rebelliousness. He delivers us from destruction. He calls us His people and provides a home for us in His Church where He makes us His beloved Bride.

Our LORD revealed to us, and to the entire world, who He is that day in Cana at the wedding celebration. With this *“beginning of signs”* JESUS points us to the restoration of creation which He accomplished on the great *“third day,”* Easter Morning. Through His first miracle, indeed, through all His miracles, JESUS manifested His glory and has revealed to us a foretaste of what is to come, the restoration of our life in God, our FATHER, as it is meant to be.

At Cana, at Calvary, and on the altar, JESUS has given to each of us a blessed sign of His glory in bread and wine, Body and Blood. With these, He who loved you by dying for you gives Himself to you. At Cana, and on the altar, our LORD gives to us signs of the renewed creation won for us through His death on the Cross of Calvary. These signs are given here on this altar and thousands of altars just like it around the world every LORD’s day.

So, it is, that here, in this sacred place, JESUS reveals that His life and death are yours. Every Sunday and feast day, JESUS reveals that His Body was given for you and His Blood was shed for you for the remission of your sins. JESUS reveals to you His glory, *“as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,”* and the glory of His death for your redemption, your righteousness, your salvation, your life. This Divine Service is His never-ending wedding feast laid out before you. Here, JESUS is the Groom and the Master of the feast, who, as your Servant, serves you Himself in bread made flesh and wine made blood—His Flesh, His Blood. Here, He is Host and Feast, and you are not simply invited disciples; You are the Bride and the very guest of honor.

Therefore, let us now do as JESUS’ Virgin Mother, the blessed Saint Mary, has advised, *“Whatever He says to you, do it.”* JESUS says, *“take eat, take drink, for in this humble bread is hidden My Body broken for you, and in this humble wine is hidden my Blood shed for you. In these I have hidden Myself for the forgiveness of all your sins.”*

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

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Rev. Raymond D. Parent II
Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church
Crestview, Florida
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