

Epiphany III

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Date: 24 January 2021

Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

- [0 : 0 0] In our gospel reading this morning, we heard the story of Jesus attending a wedding at Cana, where the party was suddenly interrupted by the fact that the host had run out of wine.
- Mary, the mother of our Lord, tells her son about this oversight that would have certainly caused great embarrassment for the families.
- Jesus responds by saying, Every year I feel the need to clarify here that Jesus is not being disrespectful to his mother.
- Whenever we hear the word woman, especially in our context, we think of something very derogatory. And for husbands, we're ready for a slap.
- But the term woman here is intentional because Mary is the new Eve. The name Eve is a word that means a woman of high esteem, and literally it means the mother of all the living.
- [1 : 1 6] Mary has reclaimed the title of woman to its original honor, as she is the woman not only of high esteem, she is the mother of all the living, that is, those born anew in Jesus Christ.
- Mary gave birth to the one who brings forth life, not death. She is the mother of all who put their faith and their trust in Jesus the Christ.
- And she now represents the church. But it is Mary's admonition to the servants at this wedding that I want us to focus on this morning.
- In verse 5 of John chapter 2, we hear Mary say, Whatever he, that is Jesus, says to you, do it.
- Whatever he says to you, do it. The first mother, Eve, disregarded the word of God for the enticements and the illusion of complete radical autonomy and liberation dangled before her by Satan.
- [2 : 2 7] This enticement still continues today with the radical feminist movements. Mary, however, is perfectly bound to the word made flesh, Jesus.
- And she calls for all of us to do what he says, to listen to him. Now, Mary is not divine. She's not God.
- But she, not only bore the one who is fully human and divine, she now exhorts all to follow her example by listening to him.
- Jesus, the God who came in human flesh, who was born from her womb. Such an instruction is needed today more than ever.
- Here in our epistle text of Romans chapter 12, St. Paul merely reiterates what our Lord said throughout his ministry recorded for us in the Gospels. Listen to what St. Paul says.
- [3 : 3 5] He says that we are not to repay evil with evil here in verse 17 of Romans chapter 12. He says that we are to live peaceably with all men to the best of our ability here in verse 18.
- We're told in verse 19 that we are not to seek vengeance. Rather, we are to leave all judgment to God, who will repay the evildoer according to divine judgment.

We are told to feed and provide drink for our enemies because in doing so, we heap coals of fire upon their heads. Verse 20. And to summarize, St. Paul reiterates the words of Jesus by saying here in verse 21, For the past eight months in this country, we have witnessed the complete opposite of what St. Paul says here in Romans chapter 12.

We have seen outrage due to excessive and abusive force by a few bad apples in the police.

We have witnessed the call for justice, the end of racism. And we have watched as news reporters speak of peaceful protesters with a straight face, all the while a police station, small businesses, or a church burns in the background.

[5 : 08] We have seen violence escalate throughout major cities in our country. And on the Feast of Epiphany, instead of focusing on the light of God, we saw the despicable display of an angry mob storm the Capitol.

And what wasn't reported, at least very well, was what happened in cities like Seattle and Portland just this last Wednesday, January 20th, the day of the inauguration, where protesters were chanting, We are ungovernable, while smashing in windows and looting stores.

And they promised to continue even with a new administration as president. Now, I'm not going to stand up here and provide commentary on what I believe happened.

We all have our opinions, or what even precipitated such outrage and violence. I'll let the talking heads give their opinions, and quite frankly, I ignore most of what they say anymore.

But what I am concerned is with what Mary told these servants and what she tells us. We are called to listen to what God says.

[6 : 24] We are called to listen and to do what God says, whether we like it or not. And what our Lord tells us, which is, again, reiterated in the words of St. Paul here in Romans chapter 12, is that we are to live peaceful lives.

Strive to live peaceful lives. We are to practice the virtues of kindness and love, while taking our cues from Jesus, not from the right or the left.

Jesus came to be the bread of life. He is the fountain for all who thirst. And he fulfills the words we heard this morning in our Old Testament reading of Isaiah chapter 41, verse 18, that says, I will open rivers in desolate heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys.

I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water. And the prophet Joel says in Joel chapter 3, verse 18, and it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine.

Beloved Jesus stands at this wedding at Cana in the region of the Gentiles as now the long-awaited Messiah and bridegroom who has come for all people and all nations.

[7 : 56] Friends, Jesus has come bringing life, not destruction and not death.

He is the bridegroom who calls us to enter into communion with him. And our Lord calls us then to go out and to be instruments of life and hope, not death and destruction.

So let's hear St. Mary's words of wisdom this morning. Let us listen to Jesus.

Let us do what he says. Rather than listening to the noise and the talking heads that instigate violence in our culture.

Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Ghost. Amen.