

Welcome everyone, as we gather once again as a people to make our offering of worship to God. You may be new to us here at St. Gabriel's, and if that's the case, we're glad you're here. Often times, when someone comes to a church for the first time, there can be some hesitation, some guardedness about what this is going to be like, what this church thing is all about. So let me tell you who we are and what kind of people you find yourself with: we are sinners, each and every one of us, and we know it. I know it about myself all too well; the people in the pews with you know it about themselves. No one here is in a position to stand in judgment of anyone else, because we are all in need of God's mercy. But we are trying – sometimes succeeding, often times failing – to do God's will, make good choices, grow in our discipleship, and support each other in this effort. At least, that's who we try to be – like I said, we're all sinners. If that sounds like the kind of parish you could call home, we would be honored to walk on this path with you together.

Today, we hear the third of the three epiphanies, Jesus' first miracle, when he changes the water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana – the other two being the adoration of the magi and his baptism in the river Jordan. In recounting this miracle, St. John gives us one of the few recorded exchanges between Jesus and his mother Mary, and that is a great gift to us even if it is so brief.

“When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servers, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’” Jesus’ response to his mother is striking and could be interpreted to be fairly harsh. “So what? Why would I care? Woman, how does your concern affect me?” If Jesus had said these words to anyone but his mother, we might be tempted to read them that way. But the Catholic Church does not read Jesus’ words that way, he would not and did not speak to his mother in that way. “How does your concern affect me?” In case there’s any doubt, we see clearly how her concern affected him by the fact that shortly after this, there was plenty of wine for everyone.

Still, why did Mary go to her son with this situation? Surely Jesus had more important things to worry about. He had just been baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist, he had made himself known, he was beginning his public ministry, but he had not yet performed a sign. He had not yet *done* anything. We are told that his disciples were there with him at the wedding, and they were no doubt watching him very closely. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the coming of the messiah would be accompanied by great miracles, so they were on the lookout. What would his first miracle be? What would really announce his presence and make people take notice that God was at work among His People?

“Uh, Son? The bride and groom ran out of wine.” This was the first miracle the Son of God was going to perform? The long-awaited Messiah, who would be the Savior of God’s People, Lord of heaven and earth, King of all nations, was going to announce his coming by making sure the wedding guests had plenty of wine to drink?

That hardly seems fitting. Jesus was much more than just someone who helped out in a pinch. He existed before the beginning of time. He created the entire universe. When we ponder on the life of Jesus, especially in the gospel of John from which we read today, we recognize that he is always in control. When the crowds come to arrest him, he speaks, and they fall to the ground. When we think of his miracles, we think of the mighty signs, curing the sick, with a word, from afar like it’s nothing; commanding the demons to be gone and they obey without hesitation; proclaiming that he is the resurrection and the life and calling his friend Lazarus to rise from the grave. Our Lord is great, our Lord is mighty, so He does great and mighty things, he walks on water, he calms storms, he feeds thousands. Those were the things his disciples were looking for, those are the kinds of things that they expected.

With such a great and mighty Lord, why would he bother with our small concerns, what would he care about the little trials in our lives. If we go to him and ask for

help with something we ought to have done for ourselves in the first place, we can expect him to scoff and say, “How does your concern affect me?!”

No. Jesus did not speak that way to his mother, and he does not speak that way to his brothers and sisters. He turned the water into wine. Our concerns do affect him, deeply. It was only out of love for *us* that his Father sent him to earth, so how could he not be affected by the concerns of those whom His Father loves like that? So we go to him with our concerns, great and small, with our worries, with our anxiety, with our pain, with our suffering, with our sorrow, with our sadness, we bring them all to him, and he is affected by them.

It is easy to get caught up in the great and mighty things that the Lord did, to the point that we forget why he did them. Christ did not do them for humanity; he did them for human beings. Christ does not love the human race; he loves you, he loves me. You, whom he knows intimately. He knows how many hairs are on your head, he knows your sleeping and your rising, he knows your innermost thoughts. And not only does he know, but he cares. He cares when you're worried about your child, he cares when you're anxious about your job, he even cares when you're frantic because you've run out of wine. “How does your concern affect me?” It affects him, he is affected when you are affected.

“When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’”

Don’t be afraid to share these small things with the Lord who cares for you. I’m not saying he’ll make every light turn green when you’re running late, but he will hear you, and he will care. Don’t listen to the voice that says, “God is too busy, He has more important things to do, I should not bother Him with this.” Bother Him. He wants you to. He commands you to. Give Him your entire life, great and small, and let Him show you just how much He cares for you.