

Mercy: Changing Water into Wine

The conversion of the water into wine at the Wedding of Cana is in John's Gospel Jesus' "first sign", a sign performed under Mary's petition. We also learn in this passage of Mary's closeness to couples at the very beginning of their journey into family life.

"*They have no wine.*" In our lives we often experience that we are running short or even out of "wine": communication pitfalls, hurts, self-centeredness, financial stress... We have no wine.

Intimately aware of our shortcomings, Jesus nevertheless continues to challenge us: to be holy, to forgive unconditionally, forming children as faithful disciples, to love as He loves the Church... We are asked for wine. And yet what we have is just water.

Is Jesus asking us to convert the water into wine?

Today's Gospel teaches us that He is not asking us for wine: He asks for what we have: water. That is what we can give. Therefore our task is to fill the jars with water, but to the brim. Changing the water into wine... that's Jesus' job.

Holiness, joy, forgiveness, forming children, dealing with your neighbors... If we pour generously our water, Jesus will take care that we would have wine.

In our *Towards a Family Friendly Parish* program, this month's topic is forgiveness. I think that the conversion of water into wine is a good image to understand mercy and forgiveness.

It is wrong to think of Mercy as letting things go: that we can give up the wine and celebrate with plain water. As Jesus teaches us in the Gospel, mercy involves always a restoration into holiness. The water becomes wine, and not just any wine, but the best one. Sin is forgiven and communion with God is restored. The valleys are exalted and a straight way is opened. Life's landscape has a new geography. In the narration of life appears a new character opening new and even greater opportunities.

This is mercy and forgiveness: creating something new, better. The love that was transgressed and the fidelity that was betrayed find new language and strength. When you were nice with me I loved you. Now that you failed me, I offer you the gift of a greater and stronger love, which, put the test, overcame that breach of trust. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, my love is stronger than your failure and now I invite you to accept my forgiveness and share in this new "upgraded" love. The water has become wine, and I want you to drink it and celebrate with me.

But there is more. Jesus' action goes even further. Jesus changes the water into wine, and later, he will change the wine into His Precious Blood: the Eucharist. This is Jesus' greatest gift. And this gift is available for us, if we bring to him our water, filled to the brim.

Nourishing Our Souls With Holy Scripture

Readings for Next Week:

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Neh 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10 1 Cor 12:12-30 Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21 (69)



Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Masses this Week

Monday, January 18: Weekday

No 6:30 a.m. Mass (*Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday*)

9:00 a.m. (L) Charles A. Del Bene

Tuesday, January 19: Weekday

6:30 a.m. +Joseph Lam

9:00 a.m. The Priests of Queen of Apostles

Wednesday, January 20: Weekday

6:30 a.m. +(L) Raymundo Rivera

9:00 a.m. +Mildred Bush

Thursday, January 21: St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr

6:30 a.m. (L) Cosette M. Realica

9:00 a.m. +Shoukry Said

Friday, January 22: Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children

9:00 a.m. (L) Lida Alexander

6:30 a.m. +John Ault

Saturday, January 23: Weekday

8:00 a.m. James J. Lyons

5:00 p.m. Special Intention

7:00 p.m. +Viola Baez

Sunday, January 24: Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

7:30 a.m. +Barbara Mazur

9:00 a.m. +Barbara Mazur

10:30 a.m. Living and Deceased Parishioners

12:00 p.m. +Lucia and Jose Antonio Venero

2016 Bishop's Lenten Appeal Begins

This month many of us will receive a mailing from Bishop Loverde regarding the 2016 Bishop's Lenten Appeal (BLA). The theme for the 2016 BLA is "Go forth as heralds of God's mercy." Please prayerfully consider making a pledge of support to this important appeal that funds many programs and ministries in our diocese.



Please also be aware that this week you should be receiving acknowledgment of your 2015 QofA offertory giving for tax purposes.

"There are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit."

If you think you may be called to share the Father's love as a priest, deacon, sister or brother contact Fr. Juan, general@queenofapostles.org or Fr. J.D. Jaffe (703) 841-2514, or j.jaffe@arlingtondiocese.org.

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time— Jan. 17

That all those especially chosen by Christ for the unique paths of holiness as priests, deacons or in the consecrated life, will heed our Blessed Mother's counsel to do whatever He tells them in loving obedience, we pray to the Lord.

Please pray for the members of our parish who are ill

Clarissa Trono De Guzman, Lyda Tanco, Mark Bush, Joseph Covas, Luta "Cornie" McGrath, Margaret Peiffer, David Stemcosky, Irma Mori, Rita Sulit, Jason Banis, Emma Collins, Teresa Sabina Piecyk, Bridgetta Jenkins, Juana Mejia, Lisa Nyce, Monique Brooks, Debby Sprah, Consuelo Jocson, Cheryl McGlynn, Teresa Subalusky, Theresa Corcoran, Cordelia Carcamo, Donna Smith, Andres Encinas Fernandez, Sabrina Fernandez Numbella.

This Week in Our Parish

Sun., January 17:

School 9-10:15a.m. Religious Education
Hannan Hall 2-5:30p.m. Ghana Group

Mon., January 18: Parish Office Closed (MLK, Jr. Holiday) No RCIA

Tues., January 19:

Parish Office 6:30-8p.m. Legion of Mary
Hannan Hall 7:30-9:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Wed., January 20:

Hannan Hall 7-9p.m. Ghana Prayer Group
Parish Office 7:30-8:30p.m. Baptism Class in Spanish

Thurs., January 21:

Church 7:30-8:30p.m. Holy Hour

Fri., January 22:

Chapel 11a.m.-12Noon Children's Adoration Hour
Chapel 3-4p.m. Divine Mercy Chaplet
School Gym 3:30-5:30p.m. Nazareth Youth Group
School Library 6:30-8:30p.m. "Mercy in Relationship" Talk
Cupertino Room 7-9p.m. Hispanic Legion of Mary

Sat., January 23:

Parish Office 9a.m.-11a.m. Finance Peace University
Parish Office 1-3:30p.m. Stephen Ministry
School 4-6:30p.m. Spanish Prayer Group
Hannan Hall 7-9p.m. Ghana Choir Rehearsal

Sun., January 24:

School 9-10:15a.m. Religious Education
Hannan Hall 2-5:30p.m. Ghana Group
Chapel 6-8p.m. Prayer Group

March for Life: Pray, Volunteer, Witness

This Friday, **Jan. 22** is the annual March for Life. We are blessed to be situated so close to our Nation's Capital, and therefore have a special calling to be prayerful and active witnesses to defending the dignity of life. We are asking all parishioners to PRAY; to DONATE or VOLUNTEER in helping us host two out-of-town groups staying at our parish for the March (bitly.com/M4LVolunteer or call 571-426-6029); and to WITNESS by attending the March with our parish group (bitly.com/M4LParishBus). Please visit with representatives of our Pro Life Committee after all Masses this weekend or e-mail prolife@queenofapostles.org.



KofC Membership Drive The Knights of Columbus Council 4522 will be conducting a Membership Drive in the vestibule the weekend of **Jan. 23** and **24**. Come learn more about the programs and fellowship the Knights have to offer.

High School Bible Study A Thursday night Bible study with high school-aged students begins on **Jan. 28**, 6:30-8p.m. in Hannan Hall. Master catechist Audrey Kasenge leads the Bible study every Thursday, **Jan. 28-May 12**. Please email s.gray@queenofapostles.org or call the Parish Office to register by **Jan. 25**. \$25 fee.

Collection of Blessed Palm Leaves We will be taking a collection of blessed palm leaves/branches to be made into ashes for this year's Ash Wednesday. Please bring to the Parish Office during business hours, or to Mass the weekend of **Feb. 6** and **7**.

Summer Exchange Program Families interested in hosting a student from Spain for our second annual Summer Exchange Program are encouraged to attend an informational session on Thursday, **Feb. 11**, at 7p.m. in the School Library. Tentative program dates are June 30 through July 24, 2016. If you are interested in sending a child to Spain, please call the Parish Office at (703)354-8711, ext. 16 or e-mail s.gray@queenofapostles.org to arrange a meeting with Fr. Leopoldo.

Bible Study—1st Corinthians: The Church and the Christian Community Factions, divisions, pride, and immorality in the nation's capital—not Washington, D.C. but 1st century Corinth, Greece. The conflicts among early Christians have striking parallels to our own. Learn more about God's plan for unity and harmony in the Body of Christ during our 11-week parish Bible Study on 1st Corinthians: The Church and Christian Community, part of the acclaimed Great Adventure series. The program will be presented by Dr. Tim Gray on DVD on Tuesdays from 10-11:30 a.m. in Hannan Hall from **Feb. 2-Apr. 12** (workbooks \$24). Contact Mary O'Donohue at (703) 379-0255 or daodonohue@aol.com with questions or to register.



QUEEN OF APOSTLES CATHOLIC SCHOOL
FAITH, EXCELLENCE, JOY

Queen of Apostles School Open Houses Queen of Apostles School will host two open houses during Catholic School's Week: Sunday, **Jan. 31** from 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. and Monday, **Feb. 1** from 9:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m. Come learn more about registering your child in our parish school for the next school year. For more information, you can contact the school at (703) 354-0714 or visit our website at QueenofApostlesSchool.org.

Science Fair Judges Needed The Queen of Apostles School Science Fair will be held on Thursday, **Feb. 4**, 2016 from 7-8:30p.m. in Hannan Hall. The snow date will be **Feb. 11**, 2016. A light dinner and an orientation for the judges will be at 6:15 pm. A background in science, math or engineering is not required, but is helpful. Please contact Miss Kathryn Ferrante (k.ferrante@queenofapostlesschool.org) at Queen of Apostles School for more info if you are interested in being a judge.



Religious Education Students

(over the age of 7 and in their 2+ year of Religious Education) desiring and preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) have a deadline of **Jan. 17** to submit the Sacraments Registration Form and fee.



Certificates of Eligibility from godparents/sponsors (of Confirmation or Sacraments of Initiation students) are due **Jan. 24**. If a godparent/sponsor is a registered member of Queen of Apostles, please call the Parish Office to make an appointment to meet with a priest.

Thank you for your generous contribution to the Poor Box. This weekend, the collection will go towards **Christ House**. Next weekend, the collection will go towards the **Poor Sisters of St. Joseph**.