

“COME TO ME”
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I am very happy to be with you at this Eucharistic Congress. I want to thank Archbishop Hartmayer for his kind invitation. I greet Cardinal Cupich and the other Bishops gathered here. As the Holy Father’s personal representative, I wish to assure you of his spiritual closeness during these days as we deepen our faith in the Holy Eucharist, the “source and summit of all life in the Church.”

I was delighted to discover your theme – *Come to Me*. June is the month for honoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and a Scriptural passage associated with this devotion is: *Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.*”

Jesus is constantly inviting us to come to Him, especially in the Eucharist. He invites us to have a personal encounter with Him. In his first encyclical letter, Pope Benedict XVI said, “Being a Christian is not a result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but it is the result of an encounter with an Event or a Person, who opens up new horizons and gives our life a decisive direction.” (Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter 25 December 2005, 1)

I would like to speak to you today about this encounter with Jesus in St. John’s Gospel, from the beginning of the Gospel to the Event of Cana in Galilee to the Upper Room, focusing principally on the Eucharistic overtones of the event of the miracle in Cana whereby our Lord performed the first of His miracles and showed forth His glory. It was there that the disciples first began to believe in Him.

Nevertheless, at the beginning of the Gospel, John the Baptist points out Jesus as the Lamb of God. The disciples of John begin to follow after Jesus, and Jesus enters into a dialogue – a personal encounter – with them. He asks them, “*What are you looking for?*” They respond with a question: *Where do you stay?* Jesus answers, “*Come and see.*” They spend the whole day with Jesus, and after one day, Andrew says to his brother Simon, “*We have found the Messiah.*”

After calling a few others to himself, Jesus goes for a wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, where his mother Mary is present. Sometimes we come to Jesus through Mary. There is an intimate connection between the Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary. The wedding feast of Cana can help us to deepen our Eucharistic faith and to learn from Mary how to be attentive to the needs of others.

When we run out of “wine”, we risk losing the nuptial joy of life. From Mary, we learn to respond to the crises of our day, represented by the six empty jars. Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, is attentive to the needs of humanity. She sees a need, and she speaks to her Son. Mary also speaks to us, commanding: *Do Whatever He tells You*. What does Jesus tell us? *Fill the jars*. The Eucharistic Mystery and Mary’s maternal mediation compel us to work with Christ in providing the new “wine” that brings joy to the hearts of the men and women of our day.

I wish to briefly examine the connection between Mary and the Eucharist, before exploring the mystery of the Wedding Feast of Cana.

Mary and the Eucharist

There is a strong connection between Mary and the Eucharist. Mary is the “place” of the Incarnation of the Son of God. In her body was born the “body of Christ.” The Son born from her was truly God and man. In the beautiful Eucharistic Hymn attributed to Innocent VI, we hear: *Ave verum Corpus natum De Maria Virgine - Hail, true body, born of the Virgin Mary.*

The Virgin Mary takes part in a Trinitarian Event – the Incarnation. The Father wishes to save us through His Son and Mary conceives by the Holy Spirit. Each Sunday in the Creed we say *Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine.* Mary’s role cannot be underestimated. She guarantees the reality of the Incarnation. In the Christian East and West, she is the *Theotokos*, the God-bearer, the Mother of God. She is the one who gave him his human body and characteristics; it is she who provides us with the assurance that Jesus is truly human and has a human nature, in addition to his divine nature.

Mary is connected to the Eucharist because she is the Mother of Christ. She has a real, objective and personal relationship with Jesus in her maternity. While we can speak of the “Body of Christ”, which came forth from the womb of the Virgin, we can also speak of the Eucharistic form of the “Body of Christ.” Mary has a link with the Eucharistic Christ since her maternity is permanent and Christ is only One. Mary, mother of the body of Christ, is also mother of the Eucharist.

Mary lived her Eucharistic faith even before the institution of the Eucharist inasmuch as she offered her virginal womb for the Incarnation of God’s Word. At the Annunciation (which we are celebrating today), Mary conceived the Son of God in the physical reality of His Body and Blood, anticipating within her body what to some extent happens sacramentally in every person who receives the Lord’s Body and Blood in its Eucharistic form. (cf. Pope John Paul, *Ecclesia De Eucharistia*, 55) Mary is the tabernacle where the Incarnate Word made his dwelling, a symbol of the dwelling of the Word in the Eucharist, present in the Church.

The same body born from Mary is born to become the Eucharist. This is the mystery of the Body of Christ born from her and present in the Church. Mary is the mother of the Body of Christ that becomes the sacrament of salvation.

At each Mass, in obedience to the command of the Lord- *Do this is memory of me* – we accept Mary’s invitation at Cana – *Do whatever He tells you.* Saint John Paul II explains:

With the same maternal concern which she showed at Cana, Mary seems to say to us: “Do not waver; trust in the words of my Son. If he was able to change water into wine, he can also turn bread and wine into his Body and Blood, and through this mystery bestow on believers the living memorial of his Passover, thus becoming the ‘bread of life’.” (*Ecclesia De Eucharistia*, 54)

The Dynamic of Cana

It is important to observe the dynamics of the event at Cana. At Cana in Galilee, the Lord performed the first of his signs and the disciples saw his glory and began to believe in Him (cf. John 2:11-12). In John’s Gospel, it is at Cana that Jesus is revealed as the Son of the Father. The event of Cana points to Christ. *He* is the One who *performs* the sign. He manifests *his* glory. Seeing the miracle the disciples come to believe in *Him*.

Mary's presence at Cana is not merely coincidental. She is the mother of the Messiah. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says:

At Cana the Mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is a sign of another feast- that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at the request of the Church, his Bride. It is at the hour of the New Covenant, at the foot of the Cross, that Mary is heard as the Woman, the new Eve, the true "Mother of all the Living." (CCC, 2618)

While Mary seldom appears in John's Gospel, her presence at Cana and Calvary cannot be overlooked. At the beginning and end of the Gospel, she is directly and uniquely involved with the person and saving work of her Son. Mary arrives at Calvary, but begins her journey toward the Cross at Cana, the site of Jesus' first miracle.

It is an event that prophesies of the Hour of Jesus' glorification. At both events, Mary is present and Jesus calls her "Woman." At Cana, Jesus' hour is prophesied; at Calvary, it is realized. At Cana, Mary presents her Son to the world with his first miracle; at Jerusalem, the Son presents His mother to the world as mother of the New Covenant. In both events, Jesus manifests his glory as the Son of God who brings salvation.

Just as the celebration of Epiphany allows the Church, with the Magi, to adore the Lord, so too the wedding feast of Cana reveals the glory of the Lord, a glory which is extended in the celebration of the Eucharist. The *Catechism* teaches:

The sign of the water turned into wine at Cana already announces the Hour of Jesus' glorification. It makes manifest the fulfillment of the wedding feast in the Father's kingdom, where the faithful will drink the new wine that has become the Blood of Christ. (CCC, 1335)

The setting of the miracle of Cana at a wedding, a nuptial ceremony, should not be overlooked either. Ideally, it should be viewed in light of two other "nuptial" pacts that also took place "on the third day": the covenant made between the Lord and Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex 19) and the new and eternal covenant of Calvary, in which Jesus gave Himself up entirely for his Bride. At Sinai, the people exclaimed: "*Whatever the Lord says, we will do!*" (Ex 19:8). After the resurrection and at his Ascension, Jesus tells his disciples to "teach all the nations to observe everything that I have commanded you." (Mt 28:16) At Cana, Mary says: *Do whatever he tells you*. At Cana, Mary's invitation to the others is to follow Christ in a spousal way – completely and faithfully.

Yes, at Cana, the setting is a wedding. It is interesting that Mary and Jesus, along with the disciples, are there to celebrate something that is profoundly human. Jesus, true God and true man, is among the people. We should not expect him to be elsewhere. His mother is there too and is attentive to the dynamics of the wedding itself. She is the one who tells Him: *They have no more wine*.

When Mary says, "They have no more wine," she is referring to a substance that has deep meaning. Wine in the scriptures, theologically-speaking, alludes to drinking in the Spirit – that is to prophecy. The reference here could also point to the necessity of the new wine of the new covenant to be inaugurated by the Messiah. Mary attends the wedding and is present as a mother. Fully aware as a

mother of who her Son is, she knows that Jesus is able to remedy the situation. She has over the years become an “expert in Jesus.” She knows she can go to Him.

Mary is the attentive *woman*. She has a feminine sensibility about what is necessary to celebrate the feast properly. When she brings the matter to Jesus’ attention, we hear a startling response, “*Woman, what has this to do with me? My hour has not yet come.*” The use of the word *woman* hearkens back to Genesis. Christ is the New Adam. Mary is the New Eve, a model of the feminine in the plan of God. Mary also represents humanity, wedded to Christ and redeemed by His blood. Mary understands why she is called *woman* and is not deterred by the seemingly harsh tone; rather, she remains ever-attentive to the needs of the feast. She observes, she intuits, and she keeps silent except to point out the lack of wine. Even after Jesus’ response, she remains silent, saying only: *Do whatever He tells you.*

Fill the Jars.

What is that Jesus tells the servants to do? *Fill the jars.* St. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote, and it remains valid, for our era: “Every epoch has its nights and the nights of our time are not few.” Today we live in a fragmented, unstable culture, whose Christian roots are eroding. People are experiencing high levels of anxiety. A spiritual emptiness is beginning to dominate our culture. The six empty jars of the story of Cana may serve as a useful metaphor to describe our world and the Christian response to the Lord’s command to fill the jars – a response which the Eucharist and the Virgin help us to make more effectively.

Each jar represents something lacking in our society. What are these six jars? They represent the lack of festivity (joyousness in a feast); lack of “gift”; lack of memory; lack of prophecy; lack of beauty; and a lack of silence.

The First Jar: Lack of Festivity

The first empty jar represents the lack of festivity or joyousness in the world, an inability to celebrate. There is a sadness that pervades today’s culture, a mortal sickness in which bitterness dominates people’s private, social, political, and cultural life. Cynicism has set in and people are no longer disposed to joy. Society has advanced in science and technology, but while these things make life easier, they do not eliminate sadness. A new, “technical” society, rooted in efficiency, has arisen, but no amount of technology can produce real and lasting joy. Why not? Pope Paul VI said that joy comes from beyond; it is spiritual. Sadness comes from within man. While it is convenient to blame God for many of the world’s ills – suffering, misery, poverty, etc., it is important to recognize that these result from the *interior* weakness of individuals. Pope John Paul II recognized that at the root of structural or social sin, there is also personal sin – interior weakness (cf. *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 18).

Contributing to this sadness is a utilitarian culture which tends to value people based on what they do, have, and contribute rather than based on who we are as persons. The push toward an ever-more technical and efficient society is taking us away from the roots of ancient cultures which were more concerned about being and beauty than usefulness and efficiency. The joy of simply being together and enjoying one another’s company is diminishing.

Some people cannot imagine enjoying anything. They have become cynical, convinced that they will live in the condition in which they find themselves, without hope of real improvement. Even the sense of eternity is lost to some. We cannot say that the Church is unaffected by this. The Holy Father himself

has mentioned that some Christians celebrate Lent without Easter! Yes, there is a crisis of joy and of desiring to be together even within the Church.

How are we to remedy this? The Eucharist is the sacrament which nourishes Christian joy. It is the strongest sacramental sign of the Paschal Lordship of Christ, recalling his Paschal Victory over sin and death. In the Eucharist, Christ is among us. The joy that He has won is preserved and shared. The Eucharist is not incomplete or fading like the pleasures of this world of which we partake to try to experience joy; it is a lasting joy. Joy is fruit of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus breathed on the Apostles on that first Easter, when they rejoiced to see the Risen Lord!

The Church celebrates the Eucharist with a spousal joy, the joy of one promised to Christ. The Eucharist is a foretaste of the eschatological banquet in which those invited will share in the heavenly banquet of the kingdom in its fullness. The Church brings the world joy when she offers the Eucharist. *Fill the jars*. We are to fill the jars with the Eucharistic joy.

Mary teaches us that joy is also to be received as a gift. At the Annunciation, the angel greets Mary, "Rejoice, full of grace." Mary is filled to the brim with joy and grace. Mary brings joy to the world, for she gave us Jesus. She is the cause of our joy. She brings joy to Elizabeth and John at the Visitation. She brings the world joy at Jesus' birth. Mary is an archetype of the Church. She says: *They have no more wine*; it is wine that brings joy to the heart of man (Psalm 104:15). She reminds us that joy is possible and that we are to be servants of joy. We know this joy of being loved by God, especially in the Eucharist. Our Eucharistic joy must fill the first jar!

The Second Jar: The Lack of "Giving"

The Eucharist is a mystery of self-giving. Through His offering on the Cross, Jesus makes a radical gift of Himself to the Father and, in the Eucharist, to us. The miracles of Jesus, whether the multiplication of the loaves or the changing of water into wine, show the super-abundance of God's gift in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the sacrament of fraternal communion, solidarity, and sharing.

Mary is the Mother of the Son, given to us in the Eucharist. She gave herself to God, especially in her radical Yes at the Annunciation. At Christmastime, we celebrate the gift of her Son which she offered to the world, but her giving continued to Calvary, where what was prophesied in the story of Abraham offering his son Isaac is realized. There, Mary is immersed in sorrow, participating in the death of her Son. Her presence beneath the Cross, also unites the Church and all of creation to the offering – to the giving of her Son – to the Father.

Today, despite pockets of generosity, we are scandalized by the ever-increasing selfishness that pervades the world. Statistics tell the story. Eight of the world's wealthiest people have the combined assets of the bottom 50% of the world. Half of the world live on less than \$2.50 per day. The poorest 40% of the world's population accounts for 5% of global income. Twenty-two thousand (22,000) children die each day due to poverty. In 2005, the wealthiest 20% of the world consumed 76% of the world's resources; whereas the poorest 20% consumed only 1.5% of the world's resources.

To fill the empty jar, which represents a lack of giving and generosity, the Church needs to challenge the culture of consumption and individualism by ceaselessly pointing to the common good. At Christmas, people show a special generosity; this is the logic of the gift which Christians must show year-round. At Christmas, we remember that *Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Savior is given*. The Infant King

calls us to give – and to make a gift of ourselves in humble service. This is true at Calvary also. The Son handed himself over to redeem us – for the salvation of the world rather than saving Himself, but gives us the pattern for our life. To fill the jars, we must cultivate a new spirit of generosity, mindful of the dire poverty in which many are forced to live. The truth of the Eucharist is that it is God’s gift to us. Cherishing each person as a response to the gift of the Eucharist is a sure remedy to the throwaway culture and selfishness. How do we care for the least of our brothers and sisters?

The Third Empty Jar: The Lack of Memory

The third jar represents a lack of memory. Modern man lives in the present moment. Today we risk losing our memory – that is, our connection with the past, and with it, the collective wisdom of our ancestors. One result of the Enlightenment and modern philosophy is that people have a genuine distrust in speaking about the future and a distrust of the past, that is, of the Tradition. Living in the present moment, we move from one thing to another, sometimes presuming that what is most recent is best and that the lessons of the past were for primitive people in primitive times. We risk losing the sense of being part of a living tradition. It is as if we are trying to blot out the past.

For Christianity, the past is decisive. God has acted in history. Salvation began in historical events, and our eschatological future lies in remembering what God has done and in awaiting the future that will come. St. Thomas Aquinas captured it well in his *O Sacrum Convivium*: “O sacred banquet, in which Christ becomes our food, the memory of his passion is recalled; the soul is filled with grace; and, the pledge of future glory is given to us.”

The Eucharist is the sacrament of memory. It is a memorial that recalls the history of grace – what God has done – in Christ. It preserves the charity of God and the love that He has for each of us. It is a memorial (*anamnesis*). Jesus commands: *Do this in memory of me*. Yet, it is not a simple remembrance or repetition but the celebration and remembrance of a mystery that makes present the saving sacrifice of Calvary in an unbloody manner.

Mary is the woman of the memory. In her were joined the graces and hopes of the people of Israel. Through her Son, all that was prophesied was fulfilled. She is rooted in the history and faith of her people. She does not believe only because God has an intimate, personal relationship with her; rather, she believes as one who belongs to a people whom God has chosen as his own. Her *Magnificat* captures the fact that her faith is directed toward the God of her fathers. In her *Magnificat*, Mary preserves the memory of the great works of God in the past and foresees the future works of Divine Mercy and blessing for future generations.

Mary is the living memory of the Church. She teaches the Church about the need and duty to tell others about the love God has for them. The Church has a role in communicating the story of salvation history, while giving prophetic witness, thanksgiving and praise to the God who saves. Her response will motivate others to also give witness and to encourage trust and hope in God. To fill the jar, we must learn from Mary how to cultivate the memory of the things of God, recalling his covenants, especially the new and eternal covenant made in the Blood of Jesus. By telling the story of salvation history, the Church can provide society and culture with a way of recovering its lost unity.

Today we are in danger of living only in the present moment, in an ephemeral way- without looking to the future: to our destiny and the End Times. Consistent celebration of the Eucharist helps us to remember God's work in Christ and to look forward in hope to the future glory that awaits us.

The Fourth Empty Jar: The Lack of Prophecy

The fourth jar represents prophecy. Pope Paul VI once said, "The Church needs a perennial Pentecost. She needs fire in her heart, words on her lips, prophecy in her outlook." (Paul VI, General Audience, 29 November 1972)

Today there is a loss of the sense of the transcendent and of our final destiny. Without desiring to live in the Spirit, people still want to know the future. While science and reason can tell us many things, they cannot accurately predict all future events. People are losing sight of an *ultimate* future. They look at larger cultural, political and social trends and notice changes. Where are we going? When people say, "We are headed toward the future", what exactly do they mean?

The Eucharist is the sacrament of the future with God. The Church not only speaks of an ultimate future but also carries out works capable of bringing man to his eschatological end. She evangelizes, giving birth to faith, which leads to the beatific vision. She baptizes, creating the condition for adoption as children of God in view of being heirs to the Kingdom. She celebrates the Eucharist, the pledge of future glory. Finally, she witnesses to charity as a response to the Sacrament of Charity, in anticipation of the Final Judgment, in which how we treat the least of our brothers and sisters is decisive.

Sunday is the Eucharistic day *par excellence* – an affirmation of the Church's Eschatological Faith. For the pilgrim Church, Sunday is the memorial of the eschatological gift of the Spirit that anticipates the Parousia. The Eucharist inaugurates the new times and makes the life of the People of God a dynamic journey toward the presence of the Living God. Its celebration on Sunday reminds us that work is relative; that we are meant to rest and to rejoice in the Lord.

Mary lives her prophetic charism in view of her destiny in God. The mystery of the Assumption captures this. She was assumed body and soul into heaven and now shares in the glory of heaven. She is the image of the Church in her perfection – what we are all called to be. She is a reminder of the glory that awaits us. She offers prophetic witness that the promises of the Lord will be fulfilled.

Consumed by his daily existence, modern man makes decisions in view of his brief time upon this earth, without remembering his past (Tradition) or looking forward to his destiny (the eschaton). We live in a climate of nihilism, which has left many with a feeling of despair and emptiness, yet, at the root, we find that there is still a desire for the Absolute, for the world has been unable to provide satisfactory answers to life's deepest questions. Even if it appears that we are living in a moral and spiritual desert, created by nihilistic philosophies and ideologies, we must recall that God still comes to us – even in the desert and leads us to the Promised Land. Filling the jar means recovering a sense of the mission of evangelization and re-proposing the wealth of the Church's spiritual tradition. To fill the jar means witnessing to eternal truths to the end; the lives of the modern martyrs give prophetic witness to things eternal.

The Fifth Empty Jar: The Lack of Beauty

Simon Weil famously said, “Beauty is to things as holiness is to the soul.” Beauty is a fundamental category of being, nature, man and God. Are we living in a world of beauty? Perhaps, the amount of brutality that we see on the news each evening answers the question. We are living in a world, characterized by brokenness, disproportion, and a loss of sense of distance and propriety.

The world is marked by brokenness. We know when something, which was once whole, is now shattered. We find it disconcerting when that which should be whole is not. Society is characterized by fractures: between past, present, and future; between doing and being; private and public ethics; ethical demands and truth; life and love; etc. These things little by little have been separated, leading to a world of moral and ethical relativism.

The ugliness of the modern world is seen in the lack of proper proportion to things. There is a genuine loss of a sense of measure and pace. Everything in our world is rapid-paced. Life is marked by excess, by living without breaks or contemplation. People are increasingly immoderate in speech, dress, consumption of food and alcohol, in the sizes of homes and cars. There is little room left for stillness, proportion, nuance, and asceticism. In the end, much of what remains is gross and grotesque.

Beauty is undermined by a loss of a sense of distance and propriety. Modern society is characterized by a lack of sobriety, vulgarity, shouting and coarseness in speech, anger, and a familiarity that doesn’t respect roles and authority in life, leading to disharmony in society and in the family. If there is any doubt, again, watch the news or listen to the radio to see whether there is shouting or intelligent debate.

In contrast to the pervasive ugliness, there is the Eucharist, the icon of beauty. It is called the beautiful feast and the beautiful “bread”. There is a beauty in a family meal, having loved ones gathered together with a father (in the person of the bishop or priest) and a mother (with the Blessed Virgin present). There is active listening and fruitful discussion at family meals. The whole family is strengthened and nourished. The image of a peaceful family meal is beautiful.

Mary reminds us by her very presence of beauty. She is called *tota pulchra* – all beautiful. She is beautifully depicted in art, but what is truly beautiful about her is the grace of God at work in her. She was conceived immaculately – with innocence – and lived in full conformity with Christ. This is what draws us to her – her interior beauty. She is the beautiful mother who never separates herself from us but who attracts us with the beauty of her holiness. She is full of grace – close to Christ and close to us. While God is the Supreme Beauty, Mary is the fairest daughter of our race.

To fill the jar with beauty, we must commit ourselves to holiness. Mary, in her humble acceptance of God’s will in her life, shows us the way of beauty, the *via pulchritudinis*. She demonstrates that seeking God’s will leads us to that which is true, good, and beautiful. Committing ourselves to the truth – to the person of Jesus Christ and that which is revealed by the Church – will help restore beauty. We might reflect on our treatment of creation and our neighbor, which show forth the beauty of the God who made them. We will not be happy without truth and without beauty, which are found in Christ. Dostoevsky said, “Beauty will save the world.”

The Sixth Empty Jar: The Lack of Silence

Silence belongs to the original experience of man. Adam was created in solitude. We need silence to reflect and to search for answers and meaning. We live in a culture of noise. The lack of silence threatens our culture. We have created a new Babel, a society in which people talk past one another, unable to listen, to communicate effectively, to understand, or to think deeply. The “heart” does not have the silence it needs to listen to others or even to listen to itself. Developments in technology, especially in the field of electronics, have made silence rare. Without silence, it becomes increasingly difficult to develop one’s spiritual life, especially when God speaks in a whisper.

The Eucharist is the sacrament of silence. There is the silence of the three days in the tomb as the Liturgy of the Hours recounts on Holy Saturday:

Something strange is happening. There is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh and hell trembles.

Jesus is present in the Eucharist. He is the Word made Flesh. He dwells in the tabernacle in silence and speaks only to our hearts. How many come to our churches to find comfort in his presence, to pour out their hearts, and to adore Him in silence!

Mary too is the woman of silence. At the Annunciation, she was silently recollected when the angel appeared to her and pondered what his greeting could mean. One can imagine the silence of that holy night on which Mary gave birth to the Child in Bethlehem. Later in the Temple, she contemplated all the events and the words of holy Simeon in her heart. There is a great silence over the early years of Jesus’ life through which Mary accompanied him. Even in his public life, in John’s Gospel, between Cana and Calvary, Mary keeps silent. At the foot of the Cross, Mary is silent and hears the words of her Son. She is silent in prayer with the Apostles at Pentecost when she again encounters the Spirit who overshadowed her at the Annunciation. She is a woman of Silence.

But she speaks at Cana: *Do whatever he tells you.* He says, *“Fill the jars.”* To fill this jar means committing ourselves to building a culture of silence; that is, having a little more silence daily to pray and to hear God’s voice. It means committing ourselves to having silence in the liturgy- after the readings and homily or after Communion – and to arriving early to prepare and staying afterward to give thanks. The culture of silence also means guarding our speech – not only from profanity, hurtful words, gossip, and idle chatter, but also saying only the good things people need to hear. The culture of silence allows us to be more open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit at work within us, who prays for us even when we do not know how to prepare as we ought. It is the Spirit who hovered over the waters at the dawn of creation who will renew the face of the earth. It is the Spirit of the new Pentecost who conquers the disunity of the new Babel.

Conclusion

The six empty jars – festivity, self-giving, memory, prophecy, beauty, and silence – must be filled in response to the gift of the Eucharist which we have received from God through Mary. Cana is an invitation to heed the words of Mary – *Do whatever he tells you* – and of Jesus – *Fill the Jars*. Through our

obedience to these words the glory of the Lord – the glory of our Eucharistic Lord – will be manifest. These two commands give us a pattern for our life.

At Cana, Mary instructs us to listen to the voice of her Son. She is a master of listening. As a Jew, the words of the *Shema* – *Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is God alone ...* would have been on her lips. In silence, she mastered the art of listening to the voice of God and invites us to do the same. If we do not listen, we cannot respond as she did to Gabriel at the Annunciation – with a definitive *Yes*. Her belief and listening coincided with her belonging to God; she was full of grace! This spirit of listening to the voice of her Son matured so that she could experience the saving event of the sacrifice of Calvary in a profound way. There she heard: *“Woman, behold your Son. Son, behold your Mother.”* There too she heard: *“It is finished.”* In all of this, she listened, giving us the example of stopping to hear the voice of God.

Only after listening can we act. At Cana, we listen to Mary, who says, *“Do whatever He tells you”* and to Jesus who says, *“Fill the Jars.”* Mary and Jesus help us discover the balance between contemplation and action. Christ asks the servants, and with them, all of us to fill the jars. This requires openness to his miraculous power and faith, the type of faith that Mary has: believing that He can perform this miracle. It demands the humility, recognizing we cannot perform the miracle. Despite this, each person can do his or her little part – filling the jars. In exercising the virtues of faith and humility, we recognize the Lordship of Jesus and our responsibility as believers.

At Cana in Galilee, water becomes wine. We might be simple cooperators – by bringing a little water to our world to fill these empty jars – but Christ can do a lot with our offerings. At Cana, He transforms water into wine, inaugurating the messianic times with a new wine for a new era. The new wine is the nuptial gift of the Messiah to his Bride. The water of the Old Testament, of the Old Covenant, filled the jars to the brim, but at Cana, Christ transformed it. His word, his power transforms and transfigures. Through his miracle, he transforms a tragic situation into a joyful celebration! Through his miracle, he shows His glory!

The Lord never ceases to work new miracles. At each Mass, bread and wine are changed into His Body and Blood. Eucharistic worship also transforms every aspect of our lives. St. Paul says: *“Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.”* (1 Cor 10:31) Christians in their actions – in their filling of the jars daily – are called to offer true worship to God. There is a Eucharistic nature to Christian life.

Each day we are called by grace to *Come to Him*. When we do, we listen to Him and do whatever He tells us to do. We fill the jars. We are progressively transfigured to reflect the image of the Son of God – to show his glory and so that others may come to Him.

Thank you.