

# The Message of Cana And Your Future Marriage

By FATHER  
ROBERT COLLINS

Many of you who are preparing for marriage will choose for the Gospel at your Wedding Mass the familiar story of the Miracle at Cana, where Jesus changed water into wine. It is certainly an appropriate Gospel because it brings out so clearly the infinite love which God has for you and for every married couple that ever lived.

I want to picture that scene for you... a small courtyard open to the air, stucco walls covered with vines which sway gently in the breeze. A doorway leads out into the street. Opposite, another doorway leads to the living quarters. The guests are seated around tables eating, drinking, celebrating. And Jesus and his mother and his disciples are there enjoying themselves and bringing joy to the celebration.

Mary notices a group of servants conversing excitedly in a corner. Suspecting something is wrong, she speaks with the servants and finds that the wine is running out. Realizing the embarrassment which this fact will bring to the bride and groom, she hastens to tell her son, hoping he will be able to do something. He speaks to her gently but with a note of surprise in his voice. She is asking him to work a miracle; he had not come to this wedding feast to work miracles. And he is reluctant to work a miracle because he knows that it will make his mission all the more difficult. When word of this spreads around Palestine, people will flock to him, but for the wrong reasons. Some will come because of curiosity or to be entertained. Some will come to enlist his aid in a campaign to drive the Roman oppressors out of Palestine. Some will come to plot

against him because they see him as a threat to their religious authority. And his mission, the preaching of the Good News, the fulfillment of the Father's promises to mankind, will be made all the more difficult.

All of these thoughts race through his mind until he looks at the young couple who are celebrating. He loves them. He gives an order and water is changed into wine, not just ordinary wine and not just enough to get through the wedding feast, but a superior variety in copious quantities. And all because of his superabundant love for this couple.

The couple's name has not come down to us and I think the reason is that the couple is every couple that ever lived, every family built on the firm foundation of the total love commitment of one man, one woman to each other for life. That couple is you. And Jesus Christ is willing to pour out his infinite love on you if only you let him.

If God were to speak to you about his love for you, I think it might be in words like these:

"Isn't she wonderful, isn't he good, wouldn't you really want to love him totally all your life with no conditions? Do you think you would be willing to give everything you've got to make that person as full of life as I want them to be? Could you take on the commitment to make my heaven begin for him now? I'm not talking about just being nice to him, but of really belonging to him, of being part of him, becoming two in one flesh with him, of allowing him to become bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh. I know you have it in you and that you can love him this totally. I want you to give him a taste of how much I

love him. I want you to enjoy together the fullness of life I sent my Son to promise you. So important is your love for one another to me that I even give you my special power to personify your love — your children will be the two of you in one flesh.

"Oh how much I ambition for your love. Your closeness and oneness with one another is the nearest human experience of how I live and love. I desire for you to spend yourselves without reserve on one another the way my Son spent himself on you. I pledge to you, as you grow together over your years of loving, the full joy that my Son came to reveal. Nothing

is more important to me than that you love one another. So valuable and so precious is your special love for one another that my Son has made you one of the Sacraments of His Church. You in your unique union with one another are a sacred sign in your everyday life together of his caring, healing and life-giving presence in the Church. Wherever you are, whatever you say in tenderness to one another, whatever you do in loving union with one another brings Jesus in his Body, the Church alive in all whom you touch. I have called you to love one another in his name."

May these words come true in your marriages.



Bride and Groom in outdoor arch. This photo is courtesy of Burt Shapiro.

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## Marriage Courses Offered in High School

The basic purpose of any school is to prepare the student for a successful future in the world. For a Catholic school which adds the spiritual and moral dimension of that success carried over into eternal life, a course on marriage preparation is very important and is included in the Catholic high schools' curriculum.

Over at St. Agnes High School, the course in preparation for marriage is taught by the Chaplain, Father Walter F. Cushing. Father has had 22 years experience in working with married and engaged couples as he has been assistant director of the Family Life Bureau of the Diocese and has conducted retreats for married and engaged couples. He also has been active in the Pre-Cana program in Rochester.

The marriage course is a senior elective and consists of four or five classroom hours a week for one semester. The course includes tapes, movies, film strips and records dealing with all aspects of marriage from pre-marital sex, engagement, marriage ceremony, interpersonal

relationships, pregnancies, childbirth, child rearing, adoption, abortion, family planning, financing, Church requirements, divorce.

Throughout the course many speakers are invited to present first hand experiences in a variety of areas of interest to the students. The Catholic Family Life Office, the Council of Adoptive Parents provide interesting speakers on inter-personal relationships, Natural Family Planning, and adoption. Local doctors provide information on prenatal care and child birth.

St. Agnes tries to present a true picture of marriage in the modern world for Catholic couples by providing as much information as possible both for their material and spiritual welfare.

Cardinal Mooney High School also offers a marriage course through its senior theology program.

According to Chris Resch, RapAround coordinator, the course, first, has the students look at themselves and their parents, making them aware of how much

their behavior comes from their parents. The teachers then point out that a couple can't have romantic love, only, but must also have an intimacy. This is brought about through shared experiences.

Guest speakers are also a part of the program. In the last phase of the course, the teacher goes over the practical side of marriage such as the financial aspects.

Each teacher handles the course differently but they all have the same goal — to prepare the seniors for marriage.

When asked if the course meets the needs of the student regarding marriage, senior Kurt Niederpruem said, "I think the course would be good in a couple of years but right now I'm not ready for marriage."

Julie Gendron stated, "It has good ideas."

Although not all of the students think marriage should be taught now, most of them agreed that the course does aid them in their everyday relationships with others.

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