

Jesus came into our lives to spread joy

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 2:1-12; (R1) Isaiah 62:1-5; (R2) 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

The first reading from Isaiah was chosen because it is rich in marriage imagery, which links it with the Gospel story.

John expounds a whole theology in the Gospel story of the wedding at Cana. In the Old Testament, water was used for ceremonial washings. At the wedding banquet in the New Testament, Jesus changed water into wine to prefigure the dawn of the Messianic era. Then at another banquet — His last supper — Jesus changed wine into His body and blood, prefiguring the blood of the new covenant.

Cana was located about six miles northeast of Nazareth. Mary was there, but not Joseph — who was probably dead. Although he was a little late, Jesus also came to the

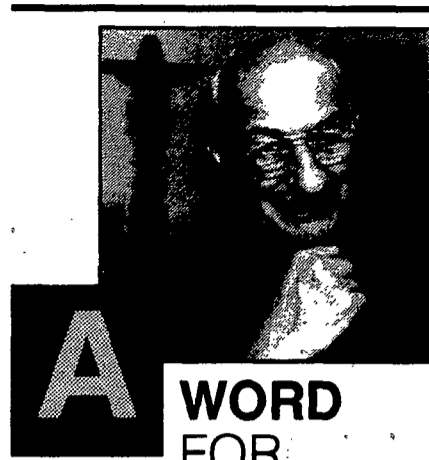
wedding. He brought five disciples along with him.

Mary noticed the lack of wine of Cana when she said to Jesus, "They have no wine." She was concerned, as she always is. Jesus answered, "Woman, how does this concern of yours involve me? My hour has not yet come."

That was certainly a strange answer. No eastern lad would address his mother as "woman." The Greek word for woman, *gunai*, was a title of respect, but still not a title a child would use to address his mother.

John was writing some 60 or 70 years after these events. He saw that Mary was the woman foretold by God in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15) — the new Eve, the Mother of all the living.

And the hour that Jesus was referring to was the hour that began at the Last Supper and ended on the cross. He changed water into wine at Cana; He changed wine into His body and blood at the Last Supper.



A
WORD
FOR
SUNDAY

Mary was only the Mother of Jesus at Cana and so her concern for others did not necessarily involve Him.

She became the Mother of us all on Calvary, when His hour came. And so her concerns for us would

from then on involve Him.

Mary understood this, so she relinquished her hold on her Son. Her valedictory words were, "Do whatever he tells you."

Feodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevski remarked once that the first miracle of Jesus was not to heal the sick, cure the blind, raise the dead, or drive out demons. His first miracle was to save a young couple from being embarrassed on their wedding day, to prevent the joy of a wedding feast from turning into sorrow.

Ted Lewis was one of the great old-time entertainers. He used to sashay onto the stage with a stovepipe hat and a silver-knobbed cane. He would do a little soft-shoe, get everybody laughing and then say, "Is everybody happy?"

Jesus came onto the stage of life just to make everybody happy and to spread joy. The only condition is that we invite Him and His Mother into our marriages and our lives.

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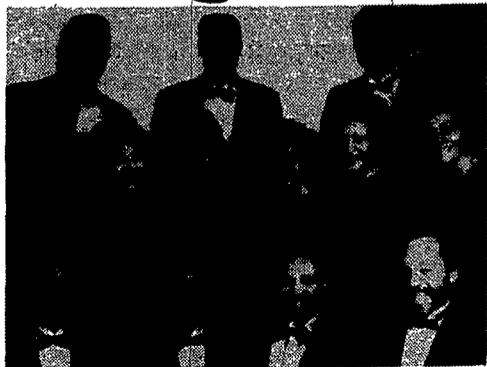
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