DAY 25: Mary's Retreat (Day Two)

Yesterday, we began a "retreat within our retreat" by joining Mary's retreat. In other words, we began to ponder the ways that Jesus prepared Mary to understand and fully embrace her new motherly role in the kingdom of God. Today, we continue this retreat at the wedding feast of Cana, where Mary's motherly mediation gloriously shines forth. Let's review the scene (Jn 2:1-12).

The mother of Jesus is at a wedding feast, and Jesus and his disciples are also invited — presumably because of Mary. The wine runs short. Mary notices this, and brings it to the attention of her Son, "They have no wine." Jesus seems to rebuke her, "Woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." Mary nevertheless tells the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." The servants follow Jesus' orders to fill stone jars with water. Then the water becomes wine, and the disciples believe.

Let's now ponder deeply John Paul's commentary on this scene. His words get to the heart of Mary's role in our lives and explain why we should be seeking to consecrate ourselves to her:

[Cana] clearly outlines *the new dimension*, the new meaning *of Mary's motherhood*. ... [It is] a new kind of motherhood according to the spirit and not just according to the flesh, that is to say *Mary's solicitude for human beings*, her coming to them in the wide variety of their wants and needs. At Cana in Galilee there is shown only one concrete aspect of human need, apparently a small one of little importance ("They have no wine"). But it has a symbolic value: this coming to the aid of human needs means, at the same time, bringing those needs within the radius of Christ's messianic mission and salvific power. Thus there is a mediation: Mary places herself between her Son and mankind in the reality of their wants, needs, and sufferings. *She puts herself "in the middle,"* that is to say *she acts as a mediatrix not as an outsider, but in her position as Mother*. She knows that as such she can point out to her Son the needs of mankind, and in fact, she "has the right" to do so. Her mediation is thus in the nature of intercession: Mary "intercedes" for mankind. And that is not all. As a Mother she also *wishes the messianic power of her Son to be manifested*, that salvific power of his which is meant to help man in his misfortunes, to free him from the evil which in various forms and degrees weighs heavily upon his life.

... Another essential element of Mary's maternal task is found in her words to the servants: "Do whatever he tells you." *The Mother* of Christ presents herself as the *spokeswoman of her Son's will*, pointing out those things which must be done so that the salvific power of the Messiah may be manifested. At Cana, thanks to the intercession of Mary and the obedience of the servants, Jesus begins "his hour." At

Cana Mary appears as believing in Jesus. Her faith evokes his first "sign" and helps to kindle the faith of the disciples.

... [T]he episode at Cana in Galilee offers us *a sort of first announcement of Mary's mediation*, wholly oriented toward Christ and tending to the revelation of his salvific power.

I'd like to highlight a few important points from this passage for us to ponder. (1) Not by necessity but by God's choice, "the handmaid of the Lord" who does the Father's will perfectly has a "right" as mother and mediatrix to point out to her Son the needs of mankind. Shouldn't we have recourse to such a powerful Mother of Mercy with regard to our own needs and intentions? (2) Mary needs servants who will obey her words, "Do whatever he tells you." Are we ready to be her servants so Jesus can begin his "hour" in our day? (3) It's clear from the words "Do whatever he tells you" that Mary's role is "wholly oriented toward Christ" and tends to the revelation of his saving power. Mary's mediation, therefore, is in union with and subordinate to the one mediation of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Today's Prayer:
Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary.
Remind me to ask for Mary's powerful intercession in my times of need.