

Jasper



ANTHONY ESOLEN

MAGDALEN COLLEGE
OF THE LIBERAL ARTS

Song of the day:

“Lord, Who at Cana’s Wedding Feast”

“The kingdom of heaven,” said Jesus, “may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son.” He doesn’t say it was a birthday party, or a feast to celebrate his son’s first triumph in battle.

It’s a wedding feast. That may be the most important image in the whole New Testament, and it’s more than an image. What is heaven, after all? It’s the wedding feast of the Lamb, because Christ is in fact wedded to his bride the Church. It’s a great

mystery, says Saint Paul. So was the first miracle of our Lord.

Picture the scene. You have a lot of happy people, eating and drinking. But the wine has run out. That’s it. The people will start going home. Who wants to drink a lot of stale lukewarm water? But Mary came to Jesus and said, “They have no more wine.” So Jesus did what his mother wanted him to do, to keep the feast going, so that the bride

and groom wouldn’t be embarrassed. He turned the water in six large clay jars into wine. That was at the village called Cana. In heaven it will be like that too: the Lord will turn the water of our lives into the wine of heaven, in the wedding feast that has no end.

I don’t think that Jesus used the image just because wedding feasts are happy times. The

wedding of a man and a woman is the holiest of the natural things that we do on earth. Nothing in nature compares to it. Look at the child on his mother’s lap. He has an immortal soul. He is going to live long after every country on your globe has met the dust. Look at the lanky young



man and the pretty girl who are going to get married. They will pledge their love forever, and by the grace of God we hope they will be crowned with royal crowns in eternity.

That’s at the heart of the fine hymn that I’ve picked for today. Don’t be afraid because it’s a poem. People like poems – children especially. This poem is a hymn to be sung at weddings. A lot of people don’t invite Jesus to their weddings, which

is rather sad, since he has invited us to his. So we must first make sure that we have invited Jesus to the feast, because he's the one who gives the feast its true meaning:

*Lord, who at Cana's wedding feast
Didst as a guest appear,
Thou dearer far than earthly guest,
Vouchsafe thy presence here;
For holy thou indeed dost prove
The marriage vow to be,
Proclaiming it a type of love
Between the Church and thee.*

Don't mistake the word *type* here. It doesn't mean *kind* or *sort*. It has a special meaning that has to do with how we read the Bible. Here it means that when a man and a woman get married, the marriage is a shadow of what is going to come, a shadow of Christ's love for his bride the Church. Let me give you another example. Noah's ark was a *type* of the Church, not because Noah knew about the Church – he didn't. It's because, just as you had to get into the ark to be saved from the flood, so you'd better get into Christ's Church if you want to survive the storms of this life.

Now, do you think that there is any power on earth or in hell that can keep Jesus Christ from loving the Church? Do you think that Satan could make Jesus divorce his bride? Not at all. And that is why nobody should break the bond between the man and woman who are getting married:

*The holiest vow that man can make,
The golden thread in life,
The band that none may dare to break,
That bindeth man and wife;
Which, blest by thee, whate'er betides,
No evil shall destroy,
Through anxious days each care divides,
And doubles every joy.*

Did you catch that wonderful truth at the end there? When you know you can rely upon your spouse, because the bond of matrimony may not be broken, you really are set free. You are free in a way that husbands and wives whose bonds are made

“Joy is not like money, or other things that selfish people grasp for. If you spend half of your money, it's gone. But if you spend love, if you share joy, it grows, and it grows the more, the more you share it.”

only of paper can never know. You can stride into anxious days without worry. You know that your spouse will never leave you. If you have trouble, your spouse bears half of it for you. If you feel joy, your spouse makes the happiness twice as sweet, twice as happy! Joy is not like money, or other things that selfish people grasp

for. If you spend half of your money, it's gone. But if you spend love, if you share joy, it grows, and it grows the more, the more you share it. When a father looks at his children, he sees his wife in them, and loves them all the more for that. When a mother looks at her children, she sees how much her husband loves them too, and that makes her love them even more. Selfish people find that hard to understand.

The last stanza says to the bride and groom, “You know that this day isn't all about you two, right? You know that it's about Jesus Christ.” So we remind the man and wife that as much as they love one another, their love should make them love Jesus always more and more:

On those who at thine altar kneel,
 O Lord, thy blessing pour,
 That each may wake the other's zeal
 To love thee more and more;
 O grant them here in peace to live,
 In purity and love,
 And, this world leaving, to receive
 A crown of life above. Amen.

How beautiful it is when creatures like us stand humbly and boldly in the sight of God, proclaiming our faith and love to one another, and praying that we will help one another to love God! There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world. Have you ever noticed a puddle in the street, and a couple of stars reflected in it? That's all the love the world can give, without God. Look up, then, and see the skies – see how grand and endless the love of God really is.



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Anthony Esolen is a lecturer, translator, and writer. Among his books are *Out of the Ashes: Rebuilding American Culture*, and *Nostalgia: Going Home in a Homeless World*, and most recently *The Hundredfold: Songs for the Lord*. He is a professor and writer in residence at Magdalen College of the Liberal Arts, in Warner, New Hampshire.

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