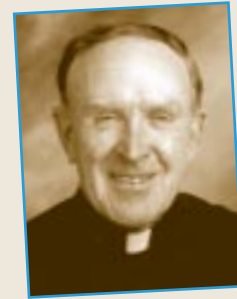




FATHER JOHN MALLEY, O.CARM. DIRECTOR OF CARMELITE MISSIONS

Dear Friend of the Missions,

Our Carmelite Family in the Philippines is blessed today with many vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Recently during my Christmas trip there, I found that many young men and women desire to enter our seminaries, our formation programs for teaching sisters, and our monasteries for cloistered nuns. What was true for vocations throughout the 1940's - 1960's in the United States and Canada is presently the case in that country.



St. Therese is a very popular saint there. Her life and teachings are well known, encouraging many to desire to become Carmelite nuns. During the past nine years, our Carmelite Mission office through your generosity has helped in the building of three monasteries in the Philippines. When a monastery community reaches about 25 in number, ordinarily a new monastery is founded. As I ask for your continued help in this May newsletter, I would bring the construction of the monastery in Tarlac to your attention.

On December 16-18, 2004, I stayed with that community. Their monastery, Mater Carmeli (Mother of Carmel), is still under construction. The chapel is nearly done, and the building of 30 cells is under way. Eight Sisters there (see photo, next page) are living in temporary quarters, and I stayed in a small room that is being used as a sacristy.

During my visit, I talked to three young aspirants who wish to enter, but presently there are no rooms for them. They hope that some will be finished during 2005, but they know only too well that construction work in their country moves along slowly, often done when money becomes available and workers can be kept on the job.

Carmelite Missions has been trying to assist in the construction of these rooms in Tarlac through our parish mission appeals. It is estimated that the approximate cost of a cell will be \$1000 dollars. As our priests preach in various parishes, they are asking individual families, different groups, or associations to take on the responsibility to provide funds to build one of these rooms.

It has been gratifying to see the response of many families as they contribute \$1000 dollars in memory of a deceased parent, husband/wife, family member, or for a special intention. In gratitude for such gifts, I have asked Sister Arlene Marie, who oversees the construction in Tarlac, to arrange for a small plaque to be placed in each of the new rooms with the name of the donors and their intentions. It is heartening to know that a loved one will be constantly remembered by the community and by the Sister who lives in that room.

If you may wish to have someone in your family prayed for in this special way, please let me know if you are able to send a gift of \$1,000 to help build a room at that monastery. I will send your name and your intention to Sister Arlene Marie. I realize only too well that many of you might not be able at this time to afford such a generous donation, but please rest assured that any gift that you send to help our nuns in Tarlac or elsewhere is deeply appreciated. May the good Lord reward your kindness and watch over you always.

Love and peace,

Fr. John Malley, O.Carm.

Father John Malley, O.Carm.
Director of Carmelite Missions

REMEMBER THE CARMELITE MISSIONS WHEN YOU WRITE YOUR WILL

SAINT OF THE MONTH

OUR LADY AT CANA

If a poll were taken about favorite Gospel stories, chances are that the wedding feast of Cana would score very high. We are understandably sensitive to the pain and suffering of Jesus “man of sorrows” and His Mother “our Lady of sorrows.” Yet there “were also the joyous years at Nazareth, as her Son grew to adulthood, and something of the happiness of the Holy Family comes through in the gospel preaching of Jesus with His tender examples from home life” (U.S. Bishops’ pastoral, *Behold Your Mother*).

Wedding at Cana

The Jesus we meet in the Gospels was “a great man for weddings,” indeed for many kinds of parties. Cana is the only wedding we are told that He attended, but His teachings are filled with illustrations from married life. His herald, John the Baptist, is the “friend of the bridegroom,” who must step aside for the groom Jesus. When John’s severe disciples ask why His followers do not fast, our Lord reminds them that it was not yet time to fast so long as the bridegroom was still with them. (Mk 2, 19)

He compared the kingdom of Heaven to a wedding feast for a king’s son, to which the king invited a vast assortment of guests. (Mt. 22, 1) When one is invited to dinner, it is better to take the lowest place at table and wait to be invited to move up rather than be shamed by being told to move down; this too was a wedding feast. (Lk 14, 7) Jesus used the homely example of new and old wine: “the old is better,” people say. (Lk 6, 39)

The priest who performs a wedding is almost expected to say something about Cana, recalling the



First Grade at Flower of Carmel School, Quezon City, Philippines

kindly presence of Jesus and His Mother at the simple country wedding in Galilee so long ago. Often the Cana gospel is read at the wedding mass. We do not know the name of the young couple, whose joy was in danger of being shattered, to say nothing of the disgrace of their families with the wine supply rapidly draining to the empty mark at this once-in-a-lifetime celebration.

St. John the Evangelist saved this story for us because of Jesus. Cana was the setting of the first of the “signs” of Jesus which led His followers to faith in Him. The first thing the Gospel tells us is that the Mother of Jesus was there, then that her Son and the handful of His first followers were also invited. Perhaps they were asked because Mary was a friend of the family. Did their coming precipitate the crisis of the failing wine?

They Have No Wine

The Mother of Jesus was the first to notice that the wine was running out. It tells us something of her sensitivity to human need. Her remark to her Son tells us also of her compassion. She simply puts the problem before Him: “They have no wine,” exactly as a mother does with an adult son. The reply of Jesus has challenged commentators for centuries: “Woman, how does this concern of yours involve Me? My hour has not yet come.”

By any ordinary standard it is unusual language from a good son to a devoted mother. Some bible experts think that the answer of Jesus should be read in a positive sense, that Jesus was telling Mary there

was no cause for concern, so that He was actually asking a rhetorical question: “Has not my hour already come?”

“Woman” sounds more harsh than in fact it was. Although not a normal way for a son to address his mother, it has the value of “lady” or “madam.” Moreover, we know not only from Cana but also from Calvary that St. John deliberately chooses the word “woman” rather than “mother.” From the cross Jesus says to His mother, “Woman, behold your son.” “Woman” recalls the first woman, the first Eve, and designates the Blessed Virgin as the new woman, the obedient Life-bringing second Eve.

What is certain is that Mary did not regard her Son’s words as a refusal, for she turned at once to the servants and said to them, “Do whatever He tells you.” Then, St. John, with extraordinary circumstantial detail, tells us the capacity of the stone water-jars, which were not for hygiene or drinking but for ritual religious washing — six jars, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus told the waiters, “Fill the jars with water.” Likely they were puzzled, perhaps even reluctant to heed so strange a command. No stinginess in this wedding gift! They did obey Jesus, and filled the great jars to overflowing.



Construction at Roxas Monastery in Philippines

Best Wine Kept to the End

When the astonished chief steward (we might say the *maitre d'*) had tasted the sudden wine the stunned waiters brought him, he whispered to the bridegroom — imagine the surprise of the young man! — “People usually serve the choice wine first; then when the guests have been drinking a while, a lesser vintage. What you have done is keep the choice wine until now.”

(continued on next page)



Construction Workers at Monastery in Tarlac



“Mater Carmeli” Community in Tarlac, Philippines

SAINT OF THE MONTH

OUR LADY AT CANA

(continued from previous page)

In the drama of Cana the master of ceremonies has more words than anyone else on the scene. He began with an expression of folk wisdom — that everyone serves the best wine first, and after the guests have drunk freely, then the poor wine. We do it no differently today! Then, however, the steward voices a gospel key to the significance of what Bishop Fulton J. Sheen called so beautifully “a miracle of kindness in a kitchen — You have kept the good wine until now.” The “good wine” is immediately linked to the “first of His signs” by which Jesus showed forth His glory so that His earliest followers might believe in Him. St. John always writes of the “signs” of Jesus rather than His “miracles,” wishing to focus attention on the person of Jesus, to whom His deeds, His “signs” point. It is highly significant that Mary needs no sign to show faith. She simply trusts and commits herself to the word of Jesus.

The “Hour” of Jesus

The “hour” to which Jesus referred at Cana is especially the hour of Calvary. In St. John’s gospel, apparent defeat and disgrace are in reality triumph and kingship — Jesus’ passion, death, resurrection and ascension. So Jesus would say, “The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.” (John 12, 23)

By changing water into wine to save the wedding party Jesus has begun the showing of His glory that will culminate on Calvary. Cana is filled with



Carmelite Novices in Manila

anticipation of what is yet to come — hour, signs (John’s constant word for the miracles of Jesus), glory and the faith of His followers. At both Cana and Calvary the name of Mary does not occur; she is identified as “the mother of Jesus” and addressed as “woman.”

Our Lady’s advice “Do whatever He tells you,” needs to be read against its biblical background. A sense of fulfillment pervades the whole account. Jesus’ wedding gift of abundant premium wine by which He manifests His glory and fires the faith of His first disciples fulfills the messianic promises God had been making for centuries to the chosen people. The prophets promised splendid wine when the messianic age would come. “Yes, days are coming, says the Lord...When the juice of the grapes shall drip down from the mountains, and all the hills shall run with it.” (Amos 9, 13)

On the world stage, Cana was a small place and a peasant wedding of little meaning. But on Mary’s part “coming to the aid of human needs means at the same time bringing those needs within the radius of Christ’s messianic mission.” (Pope Paul VI) The Blessed Virgin both intervened for a simple human need and desired that her Son’s messianic power be shown. Her will is one with the will of Jesus. She points out to the waiters what they must do so that her Son’s saving power as Messiah can appear in the sign of wine. At Cana Mary appeared as *believing* in Jesus. Her *faith* evokes His first “sign” and helps to kindle the *faith* of His disciples. The words in italics call attention to Mary’s obedient faith, leading not only to the obedience of the wedding waiters, but to the faith of His disciples. We are among them!

Rev. Eamon Carroll, O.Carm.



Carmel Youth Group in Tanay, Philippines