Called according To HIS Purpose!

TASTE Reflection Questions #14
2017-2018
Biblical Portrait of the Virgin Mary
Fr. Mark Baron

"Not my will but yours be done." Lk 22:42

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1. List one or two new things you learned about the Blessed Mother from Baron that you had not previously known. How might this new information impact your relationship with the Virgin Mary?

2. What is one virtue that the Blessed Mother exemplifies that you would like keep at the forefront for 2018?

3. Read the article on the back page. Why does Jesus refer to his mother as "Woman" at the wedding at Cana?

Mary as the "Woman" at the Wedding feast of Cana

The account of Jesus and his mother, Mary, at wedding feast at Cana in Galilee is found only in John's Gospel. John intends us to find a deeper, symbolic connection between what happens at Cana and the Genesis story. In the creation account only the name of God is spoken. In the garden the man and woman are introduced not by name but as "the man" and "the woman." The same is true in the Cana story. Mary is never named. John refers to her as "the mother of Jesus" and Jesus calls her "woman." At the wedding feast, only the name of Jesus (God) is spoken. We should keep this deeper meaning in view as we try to understand the tricky or difficult passages in the account.

The most infamous of these is Jesus' response to Mary: "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come," (John 2:4). The real drama - and deeper significance - of the passage is found in Jesus' addressing Mary as "Woman." Many mistake this address as evidence of Jesus' lack of affection for His mother, but we can discern that is not His intent. Instead the use of the title "woman" is designed to direct our attention to Mary as mother of the Church and Mother of all disciples.

Jesus addresses many women he encounters as "woman" (see Matthew 15:28; Luke 13:12; John 4:21; 8:10; 20:13). In every case this form of address is polite and respectful. It is, however, most unusual that He would address His own mother this way. In fact, nowhere else in the Bible or in other literature of the time do we have an example of a son referring to his mother as "woman."

This strongly suggests the word has symbolic value for both Jesus and John. Also of note, "woman" is the only way that Jesus addresses Mary in John's Gospel. He uses the title again from the cross when He entrusts His mother to His beloved Apostle John with the words, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." (John 19:26-27). Jesus makes her "mother" of His beloved Apostle John and, by extension, mother of all his disciples, (see John 19:26-27). Mary is the mother of the Church.

To understand Mary's role at Cana, we need to keep in mind John's larger framework - the new creation. In the first creation, "woman" was the name Adam gave to Eve (Gen 2:23). In his gospel, St. John wants us to see the "woman" at Cana as a New Eve and to see Jesus as a New Adam. At Cana, the New Eve radically reverses the decision of the first Eve.

The first woman led the first Adam to commit his first evil act in the garden. At Cana, the new woman (Mary) leads the New Adam (Jesus) to perform His first glorious work. The first Eve counseled Adam to defy God and eat the fruit. The New Eve brings the people's needs to her Son and teaches the people to obey Him in faith - "Do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5). The first Eve was referred to as "the mother of all the living" (Genesis 3:20). At the foot of the cross, Mary became the mother of the universal Church (John 19:26-27).

(extracted from Lesson 2 of "Holy Queen: The Mother of God in the Word of God," at St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology -stpaulcenter.com)