

Last Week's Sermon Summary

『Water Turned into Wine』

Pastor Takaaki Inoue

2 Kings 2:19-22, John 2:1-12

① [Waiting Quietly for God's Timing]

There was a wedding in Cana, and Jesus and his companions were invited to the banquet. During the feast, the wine ran out. Mary, his mother, approached Jesus and said, "They have no more wine." Jesus replied, "Woman, what concern is that to you and me? My hour has not yet come" (verse 4). 'Woman' was a common way of addressing someone at that time, meaning something like "Mother." "What concern is that to you and me?" means, "Whatever you may think, I have my own plans." What does "My hour has not yet come" mean? I think it can be understood as the time when God reveals His glorious presence and power. We often wish our needs were met immediately, but God has His appointed time, and we must wait for it. Mary, the mother, was someone who could wait for God's time. She called the servants and said, "Whatever he tells you, do it" (verse 5). She did not send them to buy wine, nor did she consult the steward of the feast. She entrusted this matter to Jesus and waited.

② [Human Labor and Divine Work Complete All Things]

In the banquet hall stood six stone water jars used by the Jews for purification. Each jar held 80 to 120 liters. Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Since they drew water from a well, not a tap, they had to make many trips back and forth. It was arduous labor. Why did Jesus command the servants to do this? Father Demetrios said, "The world is not merely a gift from God, but a task assigned to humanity." The six water

jars symbolize the world created over six days. It was intended for humans to add their own touch, to reshape it, and thereby complete this world. The same is true for humanity itself. Humans were created in God's image, but this does not mean they were perfect from the start. They were programmed to grow toward perfection. Only when they grow to resemble God (Christ) are they truly complete. That is why labor was given in the Garden of Eden from the beginning. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." (Genesis 2:15) We must labor on ourselves until we die. That is why we have the labor of life and the monastic life. To the human being created by God, human labor is added, and then God blesses it, transforming it into the likeness of God. Especially in the life of faith, repeating the same actions, the same prayers, at the same time is extremely effective.

Father Ioann of Kronstadt in the 19th century said, "It is the priest's duty to repeat prayers, beginning with the Lord's Prayer. For the strengthening of the soul is achieved not through diverse prayers, but by repeating the same prayer... thus establishing it." Persisting in prayer, continuing to evangelize, preaching and speaking without ceasing—it is like drawing water. At times, one may wonder if it is futile, but perseverance is what matters.

③ [The best is saved for last] Jesus said, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet" (2:8). So the servants took it to him. The master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. ↗

Weekly Report

The United Church of Christ in Japan

Miyakojima Church

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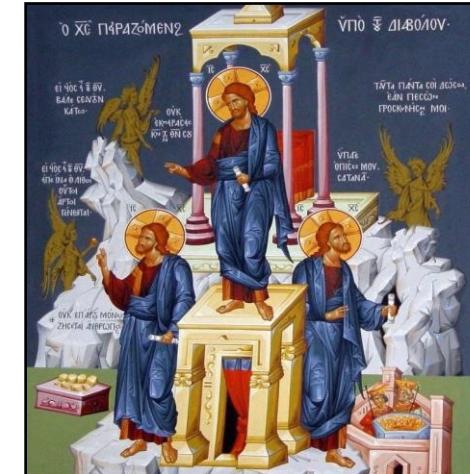
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『The Devil's Temptation』

Miyakojima Church's 2025 Mission Policy

Motto : "Let's prepare for the construction of the church "

Scripture : "The toil of those who build houses is in vain, unless the Lord Himself builds them" (Psalm 127:1)

Goals for FY2024

- 1 Observe worship services every week and aim for an average of 27 people to attend services.
- 2 We invite one person to worship in one year.
- 3 We value the fellowship of believers.
- 4 Make concrete preparations for the construction of the church.