

LENT DEVOTIONAL 2019



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Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to the formation of women and men for theologically reflective ministry and to scholarship in service to the global Church of Jesus Christ.

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Spiritual Formation Certificate

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LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 11, 2019

SCRIPTURE

JOHN 2:1-12

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. 9 When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." 11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. 12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there for a few days.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Michele Ward, Church Planting and Revitalization Certificate / Associate Pastor, Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Md.

The first miracle of Jesus compels us to think of its darker connections to the suffering that both Mary and Jesus will endure at his crucifixion. Readily comes to mind the image of Jesus' body pouring out blood and water when the soldiers pierced his side. ("But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out" [John 19:33-34]). Jesus, knowing what is to come, resists performing the miracle at Cana. He tells Mary it is not yet his time. He would often refer to his death as "my hour," as he does here.

Jesus refers to his coming death many times through his ministry. These references reveal how present on his mind is the suffering yet to come. Perhaps here in Cana he wanted simply to take in this wedding celebration with his friends and family. Perhaps he did not want to contemplate his death or expose himself to others. But his mother had other plans in mind . . . and Jesus complied, thus setting aside his agency to say "no" and choosing to say "yes" to this "sign," as the Gospel of John calls the miracles of Jesus. And each sign Jesus enacts is a small step toward his death, the ultimate sign of who he is and why he came into the world.

Lent is a season of small deaths for each one of us who chooses to journey on this road to the cross. As we daily let go of something in order to reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf, let us contemplate the Sign-giver, who gives his very life.

PRAYER

Suffering God, thank you for the sacrifice you made on my behalf. You teach me how to persist in the face of the darkness around me. I ask that in my life, too, you would turn water into wine, no matter the cost to me. Reveal to me where I need to resist evil and, by the power of your Holy Spirit, participate in transforming the ordinary into the miraculous. In the name of your son Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

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