

## **Why Mary ....?**

**When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."  
"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied, "My time has not yet come."  
His mother said to the servants "Do whatever he tells you"**

**- John 2:3-5**

*Some 2000 years ago, the hosts of a Wedding feast in Cana of Galilee in Israel faced an embarrassing circumstance when they realized that they do not have enough wine for the guests. A lad of 30 called Jesus, his mother Mary and a bunch of Jesus' friends were among the many invitees sharing this joyful occasion. Jesus was probably having a good old chat with his group of friends and wishing the newly weds a happy life together, when his mother interrupted and called him. Then the above conversation takes place.*

It is rather puzzling to acknowledge the fact that Jesus did not know or did not take any notice of the issue the hosts were facing. Was it because he was having such a great time he did not know what was happening? Or maybe he realized it and didn't want to give a helping hand? Or was it because he wanted to help but was not courageous enough to do so? We could but wonder! Why didn't he act on his own? Could not God see that these people were in trouble?

**Mary noticed the difficulty of the hosts.**

**Mary took an action.**

Mary had to inform him that they have run out of wine. Mary brought it to his attention, whether he liked it or not. Then Jesus' reply clearly shows that he was not prepared to get involved. He was reluctant to act. "My time has not yet come". Mary did not sit and argued with him, but ordered the servants to do whatever he tells them to do. She completely ignored his excuse and urged him to act right now and not later. What do we make out of this conversation? Knowing who Jesus is, why didn't she think that he will figure out the problem by himself? Was Mary an obstinate woman who wants to order Jesus around?

No. Mary was the one who knew the helplessness of the hosts. She was the one who understood what great trouble they were having. She was the one who realized their need. She was "closer" to human day-to-day life. She is not God and clearly she could not help those people by herself. But she did what she could do. She acted as a medium of communication between human difficulty and the Grace of God. She asked for the Divine Help which she knew Jesus was capable of. And Jesus was obedient. He obeyed Mary even when he was thinking that his time has not yet come.

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.

- John 2:6-7

### **A senseless order!**

Jesus ordered the servants to fill the jars with water and they obeyed him without any question. Why did they not even question what this young man wants the jars to be filled with water for? Surely they could not see any sense in filling jars with water with relevance to the need of more wine? How is Jesus going to solve the problem by filling jars with water? Wouldn't it be more practical if they laughed at him or called him a mad man? Yet the Bible clearly states that Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water” and that they filled them to the brim!

It was Mary who asked the servants to do whatever Jesus asked them to do, however senseless or useless it may seem. And the servants obeyed him without any question. They put an effort, keeping their trust in Mary and Jesus. And what was the outcome? A miracle. He turned water into wine. Was Jesus a magician? How do we say that it was a miracle and not magic? How do we define the difference between magic and miracles?

### **Difference between miracles and magic**

We could say that any seemingly impossible achievement which could be explained scientifically is magic while any such impossible performance that could not be explained by any means of science, as a miracle. Converting water into wine could not be explained by any means of science, hence it was a miracle. In fact, it is considered to be the first miracle performed by Jesus.

It sounds almost sad that Jesus performed his first miracle when he was thinking that his time has not yet come and at a time when he did not want to get involved. Was it a coincident that Mary asked Jesus to perform his first miracle?

### **Did Mary persuade Jesus to start his public life?**

Was it also a mere coincident that Jesus called her a “woman” rather than “mother” at this occasion? Why would he call her by a general term like “woman”? Was it because he was annoyed with her? Was it because he saw us, the whole humanity, persuading him to begin his spiritual journey on our behalf, through her?

## A “New” Wine!

Also, it should be noted that he turned water into “new” wine. Here we find another simple question. Why did not he produce the “same” wine or the “old” wine? Why did he produce a noticeably better wine? Was he incapable of producing the same wine? Or did he want to get the attention of people?

No. He wanted to bring our attention to the fact that the time of “Old” wine is complete and it is time for “New” wine to be served. Thus he draws a clear line between the Old and the New Testaments. The new wine symbolizes the New Testament while the old wine represents the Old Testament. Jesus is the new wine. In him, the Old Testament was made complete and in him, the New Testament was brought to life. What has this understanding got anything to do with Mary?

### *Why Mary?*

The sinful nature man adopted at the time of Adam and Eve was passed from generation to generation until the time of the last prophet John the Baptist. Throughout the Old Testament God has been in “direct” contact with people, guiding, protecting and even punishing them at times. It is as if people in the Old Testament needed constant “attention” of God like a man in his childhood.

Eve tempted Adam to sin against God. Similarly, and quite contrarily, Mary persuaded Jesus to create a world of Love. The Old Testament which was based on sin was replaced by Love. In Jesus, humanity has grown into manhood and we may feel that God no longer have “direct” contact with us. That is where the Blessed Mary intercedes for us in front of God.

Mary was the woman who invited Jesus to commence his spiritual journey. She reminded him of his duty and urged him not to delay his work. Like Eve who tempted Adam to sin in the Old Testament, Mary tempted Jesus to start his public life. She is the Eve of the New Testament. She understood the need for Jesus’ teachings for the people at the time. She understood that Jesus had to start his public life sooner and she took this opportunity to point it out to him.

Jesus called her “woman”. He combined all humanity in one word and addressed us through her. It is ironic to note that the next time he called her “woman”, it was while he was dying on the cross.

**When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing near by, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.”**

**- John 19:26-27**

The spiritual journey he chose on behalf of the whole humanity has begun and ended and Mary was the person who was there with him at both times and throughout. It is like an answer to her persuasion at the Wedding at Cana that he started his ministerial work and he is ending his sacred journey by making her the mother of all humanity. His work for us has been completed and it is time for us to live his teaching. She represented us then in front of her beloved son who was dying and she represents us today in front of God.

Mary asked the servants to obey him, to put an effort. In our day-to-day lives, the message from Mary is to put an effort into Jesus’ teachings however senseless or foolish they may seem at times. As a simple example, we may find it foolish to show your other cheek to a person who slapped your face. But that is what we are asked to do.

Like the servants who filled the jars with water, in life we may find situations where as Christians we have to follow Christ in rather seemingly foolish ways according to the standards of the world. The servants at the wedding feast did not question, but obeyed. Surely Jesus could have produced wine without their help. But he asked them to give some effort. He respected the “free-will” God has given us. It was up to them to choose whether to obey him or not and they made the right decision. They trusted and obeyed him. And what was the outcome? A miracle. Would it be impossible for us to experience miracles in our lives? Do miracles happen only at the time of Jesus?

No. Knowingly or unknowingly we have come across miracles in our lives. But they are not to be taken as granted. We need to obey the teachings of Jesus and we need to put an effort into practicing them. We need the help and support of Blessed Mary in our lives to get closer to God. And what we have to do is to follow the instruction she gave to the servants of that wedding feast... “Do whatever he tells you”... for the miracles of life to happen...

As one of the many beautiful hymns dedicated to her would say, she is the star that guides our ships in this ocean of life.

*Hail, O Star of the ocean...  
God's own Mother blest;  
Ever sinless Virgin,  
Gate of Heavenly rest...*