

## Contemplative Outreach

### Spiritual Journey with Thomas Keating

#### Part 5 Tape 28 (a)



#### **The Wedding Feast at Cana (John 2:1-11)**

Notice that Mary makes not request of Jesus, she simply presents to him the situation as it is. Any request is only implied. Initially, Jesus' response is quite off-hand and amounts to a statement that any problem is not really his problem. He seems to be trying to work out why Mary has a concern at all.

Mary's next move clarifies things for him. She tells the waiters to do whatever it is that Jesus tells them to do. This shows her detachment from any outcome and Jesus senses that the Spirit is working through her and it is not just her natural goodness that is the source of her concern. He senses that the Spirit is using her human concern to express a movement of Divine love.

So, Jesus decides to act and the water is mysteriously changed into wine and not just ordinary wine but the very best wine. The water symbolises human nature and the revelation of God in created things and the good wine symbolises a changed and new perspective about to be introduced as the Good News. And this new perspective will be generously introduced – six big jugs of it – an unlimited supply. Mary's concern has triggered a cosmic event. The ordinary is about to become extraordinary. Little things when inspired by the Spirit carry enormous power. That still is the case today and can be illustrated by the story of Centering Prayer.

#### **Centering Prayers' Story**

For centuries monks have used *Lection Divina* as their fundamental practice of attentiveness to God and listening to God. It moved them towards the contemplative dimension of life – a process of listening with the ears, then the mind, then the heart and then in silence.

In the latter part of the twentieth century meditation teachers began to move into the Western world and soon Christians became curious about their own rich contemplative and mystical inheritance. There was, however, no immediate method available of introducing people to this long tradition. Centering Prayer provided such a method eventually. Through retreats in monasteries it began to resonate with people, clerical, religious and lay. So, as with Mary at Cana, a concern shared by Thomas Keating (as Abbot of the monastery of Spencer) and other monks soon began to blossom into good news.

