

BSP # 2 Notes

- A. The whole purpose of the formal structure and sacramental grace is to reach out to the man as he is, to penetrate his being and raise him to the status of member of the mystical Head: only thus is “the Church” constituted. The encounter that, at its maximum intensity, merits the name of marriage is between God as person and man as person... What never falls away is the nuptial encounter between God and the creature, for whose sake the framework of the structures now set up and will later be dismantled.

(Spouse of the Word, Hans van Balthasar, p.157)

- B. Mary is the woman who from the book of Genesis until the book of Revelation, accompanies the revelation of God’s salvific plan for humanity, taking part in that monumental struggle against the power of darkness.

(JP II, the Mother of the Redeemer, #47)

- C. “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn 3 : 5). In baptism we are born into a new life, the life of God’s children, united to Christ and anointed in the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a sacrament that signifies and effects rebirth from the Spirit. This needs to be said, as some regard baptism as unnecessary. Many profess an interior commitment to Christ but do not wish to be committed sacramentally.

(JP II, The Mission of the Redeemer, #47)

Group Time Sharing Questions

- A. What does the title “woman” in Jn.2:4 suggest? (See Gen 2:23, 3:14-15). What do you think Jesus’ “hour” is? What does it have to do with what He is about to grant? (Consider the similarities between what He is about to give here in Jn.2 and what He will give when His hour comes.)

- B. Jesus implies in Jn.2:19 that the temple is His Body. The Body of Christ is also the Church (Rom.12:5). In other words, Jesus and the Church are united in one Body. Has this important message been foretold in the Old Testament? (Read Is.7:14, Num. 8:15, 1 Kgs. 8:10) How does John reveal this to us clearly? (Read Jn. 1:14)

(Answers for this question = the above quoted scriptural passages.)

- C. What Old Testament event is referred to in Jn. 3:14-15? (Read Num.21:9-11) What is the meaning of this event? (Consider the similarities between the bronze serpent and the crucified Christ.)

- D. Many people think of the Last Day with fear. What does it do to your conception of the Last Day to think of it as a Wedding Banquet?

Answers for BSP#2 Group Time Questions

- A. “Woman” suggests here a connection with Eve. In Gen. 2:23, “woman” is the first thing Adam says, when he sees Eve. In John 2:4, it’s also the first thing Jesus, the New Adam, says to Mary, the New Eve. Jesus’ “hour” is the hour of His death. It is the climax of His ministry He is now to inaugurate with His first sign – turning water into wine. Wine = Jesus’ blood = salvation.
- B. Answers = quoted scriptural passages.
- C. In the story told in Numbers 21:4-9, Israel complains against God and claims that He led them into the wilderness precisely to betray and murder them. In response to their claims, God sends serpents (images of Satan) to bite them as a judgment since they have in effect charged Him with Satanic intentions. When the people came to Moses to repent, God told Moses to hoist a bronze serpent on a pole. He promised that anyone who looked upon the bronze serpent while being bitten would live. In verses 14 and 15 of John’s gospel, Jesus likens Himself to the bronze serpent. People must look upon the Son of Man lifted up on the Cross – if they are to live. The image of bronze serpent, while promising salvation, warns the Temple elite that their rejection of Jesus will lead them to blaspheme God as Israel blasphemed Him.