

KOTHINE SUNDAY (FIRST SUNDAY OF 50 DAYS LENT)
(FEBRUARY 18TH 2007)

Dearly beloved:

Next Sunday, February 18th is the first Sunday of 50 Days Lent (Kothine Sunday). The Great Lent begins on Monday with the Shub'khono service. It is an opportunity for us to cleanse our mind, body and soul. Lent is the period that is completely dedicated to our body, soul and mind: Fasting for the body; repentance and confession for the mind; and all three, including prayers, are for the soul. The Great Lent starts by commemorating the first miracle performed by Jesus, when He turned water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee. The gospel reading for each Sunday of the Great Lent is about a miracle performed by Jesus Christ. As we all know our liturgical year is divided into 6 periods. The first period covers from Koodosh-Etho to Christmas and the second period covers from Christmas to Kothine; and now the third period, begins from Kothine Perunal (Marriage at Cana) to Kymtha (Resurrection).

According to today's gospel of St. John 2: 1-11, there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Mary was invited to the wedding, and Jesus also was invited to the marriage with his disciples. When the wedding party ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no more wine. After a small conversation between them, His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." There were six stone jars in the house for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. When the steward of the feast tasted the water-now-become-wine, did not know from where it came. The steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." This was his first miracle, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

God reveals His glory in different places - in a stable at Bethlehem, at a wedding party in Cana, in a muddy Jordan River, and on a bloody cross on Golgotha. Jesus' first public miracle was performed at the insistence of His mother. Jesus blessed a young couple and brought joy to their wedding party first, by His presence, and second by saving them from embarrassment when the wine ran out. Changing water into wine was a remarkable act of kindness. In the Old Testament wine was often seen as a gift and symbol of God's blessing (Deut. 7:13; Prov. 3:10; & Psalms 104:15). That Jesus would miraculously produce 120 gallons of the best wine shows the superabundance of the blessings which He came to offer.

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.

Bible readings for Sunday, February 18th, 2007.

(Kothine Sunday)

Before Holy Qurbana:

Exodus	-	20: 1-21
Joel	-	2: 12-20
Isaiah	-	58: 5-14

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles:	Acts	-	11: 19-26
Epistles of St. Paul:	Colossians	-	3: 1-17
Holy Gospel:	St. John	-	2: 1-11

Next Sunday, February 25th is Second Sunday of 50 Days Lent (Garbo/Lepers' Sunday).

With prayers,
Thomas Alex