

THE HOLY LAND



GALILEE

“AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH,
AND DWELT AMONG US”

HERE

09.22.2023

CANA. NAZARETH. SEA OF GALILEE

Our dear fellow Pilgrims,

As I was reading the gospel according to John today, for the blessing and renewal of vows of married spouses at the Wedding at Cana church, I was struck with the word "here". *On the third day there was a wedding HERE, at Cana in Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was... HERE.*

The immediacy of time and space! It felt that I was there, because I was now actually HERE. No time in between, because the time is NOW, the gospel happens *as I proclaimed it!*

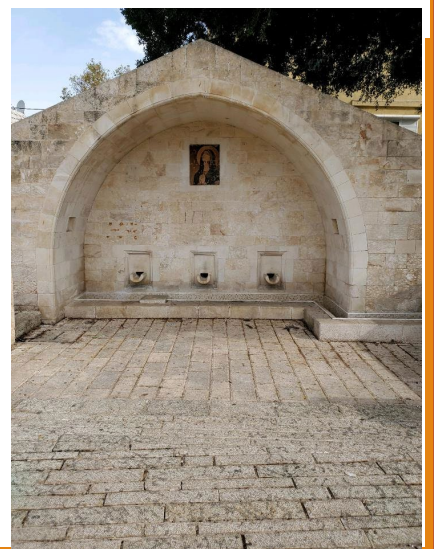
I was "here" where the "word" and the first sign of the Lord Jesus occurred before he began His public ministry



The Sacrament of Marriage is an awesome thing; it is the first act of God's salvation with us after Creation. He instituted an unbreakable union between a man and woman - where two become one flesh (Gen. 2:8-25). And here, today, Jesus comes as the bringer of salvation to God's people, making marriage a lasting sign of God's faithfulness and love to his people and also confirming a lasting seal of God's continued work of communion and salvation in and through humankind. *Behold the Lamb of God - indeed - who takes away the sins of the world; blessed are we who are invited to the Lamb's Wedding Feast! (Revelation 9:19).*

At supper yesterday, Deacon Andy Zucaro asked which was my favorite part of the day; I couldn't answer the question - I had to reflect about it. To answer his question now, I had several that touched me, because it reminded me what God was all about for you and me: The Wedding Feast at Cana (the renewal of vows of our married couples), the visit to the Well of Mary (where I

lighted a candle and prayed for everyone of you), and the Mass I celebrated right where "the Word became flesh" - at the place of the Annunciation of the angel Gabriel to Mary. For me, it is a reminder of the intricate love of God for each one of us - His sons and daughters. It is a reminder for me to live out this love as a *father* in the the pilgrimage of life with you.



In the boat ride, on the Sea of Galilee, I felt the strong sense of the Church and God's love in that boat. I was reminded by the "reckless love of God" for each one of us as we sailed through the peaceful waters of the Lord Jesus' lake. Here, He used Simon's boat to preach to His first disciples; Here, He called His first Apostles; Here is where He commanded to them to meet Him (in Galilee) after His Death and Resurrection. The Sea is a sign and a reminder of God's life-giving and life-changing love for His people.

And at one moment today, I was in the boat with so many and all of you. It was a moment to remember always.

Your spiritual guide in the journey,
Fr JC Merino

