

Reflection for the second Sunday of Epiphany. John 2: 1-11

The Marriage feast at Cana: the story of this first miracle of Jesus so well-known, even by those whose biblical knowledge is scant, the butt of many jokes. Jesus has called the twelve to Him, they are to remain the core of those who follow Him, although there would have been many more who travelled with Jesus during His time on earth. Jesus and His friends are asked to a wedding. We can assume that already they are seen as a group but not apart, they are a part of the community. Weddings at this time would have been quite possibly drawn-out affairs lasting anything up to a week with lots of eating, drinking, dancing and merriment. It is hardly surprising that the wine has run out. Nothing spoils a party quicker than to run out of food or drink. Mary, the mother of Jesus, simply says to Jesus, "They have no wine". Jesus' response is more a shrug of the shoulders, "None of my business is it." Mary is confident that Jesus can do something and will do something. We are told that this is the first miracle that Jesus has performed and yet Mary plainly expects that He will do something. So much so that she says to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." There follows this well-known miracle that changes one hundred and twenty gallons of water into wine and not just any old plonk but really good wine.

Reading John's account of this event suggests that it would have only been the servants responsible for serving the wine, and those around Jesus who would have been aware of this miracle. This miracle is the first, John tells us, that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, revealing His glory and His disciples believed in Him. We may ask what then was the purpose of this miracle? We are told that miracles are not simply conjuring tricks to gain popular acclaim. Jesus quickly dissociates Himself from any such idea during His time in the wilderness. We can see an element of the compassion that Jesus has for those He meets. The family of the bride would have suffered shame and disgrace for their failure to supply enough wine as tradition dictated they should. Also, we see the transforming effect that Jesus can have on the lives of others. On the other hand, could this set up a false impression with the disciples, could they begin to think that following Jesus was going to be one big party? If they think so, very quickly they will learn that to follow Jesus is no picnic. Demands will be made of them which they could never have imagined but also they, too, will discover that they are able to meet these demands through the strength given to them by the transforming power of Jesus. The same is true for us, it is only through the strength of Jesus that we can face the rigours of this life on earth.

*Gracious God,
your Son Jesus began his ministry at a wedding celebration
and through the miracle of the wine
showed us the abundance of your wonderful love for us.
May Jesus continue to transform the water of our everyday lives
into the new wine of your kingdom on earth,
transforming by his love the ordinary into the extra-ordinary.
Amen*