

Reflection on the Wedding in Cana of Galilee

Today we engage in the third of the divine epiphanies of Jesus

The first was the Magi bringing their gifts and proclaiming the birth of Jesus to the Gentiles

The second was the voice of God which came to Jesus at his Baptism

And the third is Christ's first miracle, the revealing of the power of God which rested within him upon which he could call and through which God revealed himself once more

Being invited to a wedding is always a special occasion, I am sure that most of you will have been invited to someone's wedding at some point in your lives. I have officiated at hundreds of weddings throughout my ministry and each one of them have been very special occasions.

However inevitably there will be those which we remember more than others simply because of something which happened which made them stand out and be extra memorable, sometimes for good reasons and sometimes because of some slight mishap or two.

I can remember a wedding where it was not the bride who was late but the groom, and I can recall having to send the poor bride for an extra drive in the car three times before her future husband thankfully turned up.

I can remember officiating at my nephews wedding in a strange church and arriving to find the marriage registers still locked inside the safe with no one present with a key?

One memorable occasion was a wedding complete with several celebrities held in one of my smallest churches in Durham, where the number of floral decorations were so large and numerous that we could hardly get the guests in.

Then of course the extra special grand occasions of local dignitaries and personal friends with free flowing champagne and specially ordered and crafted wedding designer venues.

All very memorable for a variety of different reasons and this wedding to which Jesus had been invited was no exception, Jewish weddings at this time went on for a week, it was not just over in a day, wedding guests would come and go all the time, so a ready supply of wine and refreshments always needed to be available.

Indeed such was the heavy expectation placed upon the bride and groom that not to be able to provide for family and friends and especially those who had been specially invited would have been costly to the standing of the couple in the midst of their society, not a great way to start their new life together.

Hospitality was key, however on this occasion the wine did indeed run out, perhaps it was near the end of the celebrations and the couple had simply under estimated what would be needed or perhaps more guests had arrived including the disciples of Jesus which simply stretched things a bit too far, but run out they did

Now in such circumstance you would have thought that it would be the Father of the Bride, who would have stepped in at this point, after all it is normally he who ends up footing the bill, but in this case it is Jesus' Mother who takes the initiative, showing that this wedding could well have been that of someone very close to the family indeed, and bearing that in mind it is perhaps not that surprising that Jesus' mother wants to avoid embarrassment and a potential loss of face.

So why does Mary call on her Son to intervene?

This was his first recorded miracle so she did not know what the outcome would be but here we see her portraying perfect belief that her Son would be able to help in some special way.

At first Jesus was not too pleased, mother interfering again, and failing to recognize that Jesus was not yet ready to begin to display his power in such a public setting, hence the response that it was not yet his time!

However his mother was undeterred, do whatever he tells you!

What a key expression that is, obey and great things will be the result.

So like any Son Jesus responds as asked, yet through the instructions given to the stewards Jesus in turning water into wine reveals how by engaging in his ministry and being reborn by baptismal water the way is opened up for all who follow him into the feast of the kingdom of God.

With the words of the chief steward of the wedding “best wine kept until now,” reflecting beautifully the reality that at the opening scenario of the ministry of Jesus, the wine of the new dispensation, a new covenant with God had appeared, which would lead his people toward him in a way far superior to any revelation made previously by God to his chosen people.

That wine has been poured out for us to taste through the offering of the blood of Christ and as we now go forward to receive the blessing of his sacramental gift, let us recall the mysteries of the wedding feast at Cana and rejoice with all of God’s guests in being so freely invited to share in the heavenly banquet of God’s love.

Amen.