Today we reflect on the Wedding in Cana of Galilee 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 have had my share of such invitations, not only from members of my family but also from the families of those couples at whose wedding I have officiated.

I have been invited to countless receptions and evening buffets in my time, some have been quite simple, and others have been very grand indeed. But the one thing which binds them together is the sheer joy which I and others share in as we rejoice with those who have publicly declared their love for one another. Wedding banquets are as lavish as people can afford to make them, and this wedding was no exception.

However Jewish weddings at this time went on for a week, it was not just over in a day, 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 underestimated 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.

Wedding invitations don’t just come from out of the blue we tend to know well those who are tying the knot so to speak.

So being close kins-people it is not that surprising that Jesus’ mother wants to avoid embarrassment and a loss of face to what may well have been a member of the extended family.

She calls on her Son why?

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 …it is not yet my time!

But his mother simply says do whatever he tells you…. what a key expression that is.

For within that simple turn of phrase we see the belief from the Blessed Virgin as to what she believes is possible when others place their complete confidence in her son. She knows what is lacking and she knows what needs to be provided but she leaves the instructions to Jesus, for she cannot even begin to imagine how generous the outcome of his intervention would be.

Water is brought and water is blessed and the water of purification of cleansing and of preparation is transformed into that which enables those who taste it to engage in the feast of the kingdom of heaven.

The words of the steward of the wedding “best wine kept until now,” reflecting 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.

In his very first miracle Jesus brings before his people sacramental grace, he reminds them of the promises of God and then reveals how through his own self-offering they will be brought into fruition. Jesus uses the image of water turned into wine to bring together the two dominical sacramental actions placed upon those who wish to become his disciples. First, they must be baptized, washed clean through the baptismal waters of faith through which we enter into a relationship with Jesus, through which we become a member of his extended family, kinspeople of the Lord. Through our baptismal entry we can then partake in the reality of the promise of his sacramental blood, free to proclaim how through his sacrificial blessedness we rejoice in the wine of the covenant, which is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet of God.

The wine with which we toast the expression of love at a wedding, is a sign of the love which 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.