

## Reflection on John chapter 2 vs 1-11

### **The Wedding at Cana**

**By Corinne Craymer**

#### **In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

On the third day, there's a marriage in Cana in Galilee. Mary, Jesus' mother is there, probably busy bustling around helping out with preparations and guest satisfaction. Any of us who have ever been involved with a wedding can probably recall not only the human joy but also the busyness of it all.

Jesus has been invited along with his disciples to this wedding. The guests have no idea of the transforming power that is among them, nor the host's desperate problem as Mary says to Jesus, 'They have no more wine'. This would be the host's major nightmare, in a culture where poor provision would be scorned. So, Mary turns to the servants and says, 'Whatever Jesus says to you, do it'.

There is surely an echo of Mary's original 'yes' to God here. She makes it possible for Jesus to do what now follows, in the same way she made it possible for our Lord to be born as one of us.

Jesus is going to do a new thing, a sign which points to God. 'Fill the water pots with water', says Jesus. The old stone water pots used for Jewish purification rites are filled to the brim with water. Each one holds about 25 gallons 'Now draw some out and take it to the chief steward' says Jesus to the servants. We wait with baited breath for him to taste what is brought to him. Surely water went in and water must come out? The steward tastes the wine and is utterly amazed that the bridegroom has saved the best wine until last.

We along with Mary and the disciples know that water went into those stone jars. And so begins the revelation of God's glory. So begins a turning upside down and inside out of all the things we thought we ever understood. A miracle has happened. Heaven has touched earth and Jesus has chosen this time of human joy in an insignificant village in Galilee to demonstrate God's glorious love and power.

It's a miracle of transformation and the first sign of seven in John's gospel that point to God's glory. Jesus is the source of abundance, and abundant wine is symbolic of God's presence. This is a very 'quiet' miracle. 'Quiet' because there is no great crowd to witness it, no trumpet sounding the event. God quietly shows his glory. WE need the eyes and ears of faith to comprehend its meaning.

It's very interesting that St John mentions how the steward comments about the quality of the wine. Theologians have suggested that the comment be interpreted as the inferior wine of Jewish Law and the new good wine of Christ's abundant grace. This miracle, the first of seven selected by John, he calls a 'sign'. Why does he do this? He does it because a sign points to something beyond itself and Jesus always points to the Father.

Over two thousand years later what has this sign got to do with us? What is its relevance for us today? How can we respond to this sign?

Jesus is the key of course. When we open our lives to the possibility of transformation in Christian love, Jesus changes the ordinary water of our life into the extra-ordinary life of a disciple. This change is called Grace and readies us for service.

The steward in our gospel reading is probably often overlooked but he is an important person in the story: he is actually passing on the mystery of the living presence of God to another. Faithful disciples are so called to hand over and pass on the good news of this grace. It includes what is to come finally and our reading from the book of Revelation offers us the amazing picture of Christ and his Bride, that's us, his church, in perfect union. We are all called to be good stewards of the gospel.

Towards the end of his ministry in John's gospel, we come to hear Jesus's discourse on The True Vine. Here we are invited to see the connection between the story of the wedding in Cana and who Jesus is. 'I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.' This image is a very beautiful one. It speaks of the interconnectedness of all Christians with Christ. It is an image which joins you and I together in the presence of our Lord.

There have been very large annual Christian gatherings called 'New Wine'. These gatherings have been wonderful opportunities for thousands of people to join together for worship and teaching. Such a strong sense of being part of the vine, connected to our Lord. The disruptions and changes in our lives in the last year have meant a temporary halt to these gatherings.

So, Jesus waits for us to join him just where we are now. When we take time to meet with him in the quieter moments of our lives, through reading, prayer, listening to worship music, we are engaged in the life-long learning and relationship with Jesus to which we are called.

There is an old Marilyn Baker chorus which tells of the process of change in our lives when we connect to the one true vine, to Jesus. Here are her words....:

Jesus you are changing me, by your Spirit

You're making me like you.

Jesus you are changing me

That your loveliness may be seen in all I do.

You are the potter and I am the clay

Help me to be willing to let you have your way:

Jesus you are changing me as I let you reign supreme

Within my heart.

And Mary said to the servants, 'Do what Jesus tells you'. May we know with our hearts as well as our heads what Jesus calls us to do. Amen.

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