



EPIPHANY 2
HOME WORSHIP
SUNDAY 16 JANUARY 2022

"Joy is knowing that you are unconditionally loved." Henri Nouwen

"There's no question about the reality of evil, of injustice, of suffering, but at the centre of this existence is a heart beating with love." Desmond Tutu

Our gospel reading for today is the story of Jesus at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. I invite you to read it through a couple of times. On the first occasion think about words that might describe what is happening (amazing; strange; transformation... etc.) On the second reading place yourself into the story and try to discover which of the characters best describes how you might be feeling at the present time.

John's Gospel 2:1-11
The Wedding at Cana

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' ⁴ And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' ⁵ His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' ⁶ Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So, they took it. ⁹ When the steward tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' ¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Rowan Williams encourages us when we read a bible story to look at God, to look at yourself, and to ask where you are in the story. *'In this story then, am I the worried host, relieved that the crisis has been resolved? Am I the puzzled toast master, who partially answers his own question, but doesn't really want to go any deeper? Am I*

one of the servants, observing the miracle, but apparently drawing no conclusion from what they have seen? Am I one of the guests, enjoying the party and asking no questions about where the excellent wine has come from? Or am I Mary, placing my problem in Jesus' hands, and trusting him to take it from there? John is very clear where he wants us to find ourselves in this story. He gives us his answer in the punch line – Jesus did this ... and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.'

Where did you find yourself in the story and were you encouraged by the outcome? I hope so!!

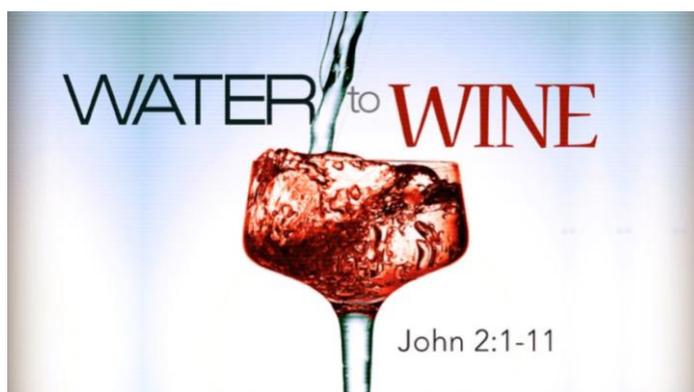
Perhaps the clue to this story is given by the writer John in the first four words... ..'on the third day'. At the beginning of his gospel he is pointing to the end, for his readers will know that 'on the third day' Jesus rose again! John is setting out the Jesus agenda, which is to, not only share in the world's suffering but to bring about transformation. To bring resurrection hope and joy even in the most dreadful of life's circumstances.

In recent weeks there have been countless tributes following the death Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Naturally many spoke about his part in the struggles against apartheid in South Africa and his role in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which he led. He knew the pain and the struggles of the people of South Africa but he was also remembered as a man with a great sense of humour and fun. A man who discovered the joy of life in the midst of pain. A man who could always see the possibility of transformation in South Africa. Although he may well have despaired at times, he lived in resurrection hope. We thank God for people like Desmond Tutu who live at the heart of the gospel.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Water for wine! Alleluia!
Laughter for weeping! Alleluia!
Faith for faltering! Alleluia!
Joy for sorrow! Alleluia!
Freedom for fetters! Alleluia!

Thanks to God for his love that changes our world!



You may like to listen to this song inspired by today's story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp5pGKR5eSA>

or simply reflect on the words of the song

Jesus, come! for we invite you,
Guest and Master, Friend and Lord;
now, as once at Cana's wedding,
speak, and let us hear your word:
lead us through our need or doubting,
hope be born and joy restored.

Jesus, come! transform our pleasures,
guide us into paths unknown;
bring your gifts, command your servants,
let us trust in you alone:
though your hand may work in secret,
all shall see what you have done.

Jesus, come in new creation,
heaven brought near in power divine;
give your unexpected glory
changing water into wine:
rouse the faith of your disciples
come, our first and greatest sign!

Jesus, come! surprise our dullness,
make us willing to receive
more than we can yet imagine,
all the best you have to give:
let us find your hidden riches,
taste your love, believe, and live!

Christopher Idle from John 2
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Sending out prayer:

We go out in joy, reminded of the gifts you give us.

Give us the openness to recognise them,

the willingness to receive them

and the generosity to share them.

Amen.

