

Second Sunday after the Epiphany 2019
John 2:1-11

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for the sermon is the Gospel heard before, **John 2:1-11.**

1 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 was gone, Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."
4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."
5 His mother told the servants, "Do whatever He tells you!"
6 Six stone water-jars were standing there, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing. Each jar held between eighty and one hundred and eighteen litres. 7 Jesus told the servants, "Fill the waterpots with water!"
So they filled them up to the top. 8 Then He told them, "Now dip some of it out, and take it to the manager of the dinner!"
Then they took it to him. 9 When the manager of the dinner had tasted the water that had been turned into wine, and did not know where it had come from, although the servants who had dipped the water out knew, the manager called the bridegroom. 10 He told him, "Everybody else serves his good wine first, and when people have had plenty to drink, then the inferior wine. You have kept the best wine until now."
11 Jesus performed this, as the first of His miraculous signs, at Cana in Galilee. He showed His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us in your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,
Peace be with you.

Once again we heard a very familiar reading from the Gospel of St. John. Jesus, His mother, and His disciples had an invitation to a wedding and they came to help the couple celebrate the beginning of their life together as husband and wife. Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding at Cana in Galilee.

Weddings in that culture were major celebrations that often lasted an entire week. The host of the wedding, usually the groom or the groom's family, supplied food and drink for the guests. Running out of food or drink would have been a major embarrassment.

Now Mary had noticed that the family had run out of wine. We don't really know how Mary knew about all of this, but she told Jesus about it. The context indicates that Mary hoped Jesus would deal with the problem, but that she would let Him work out the details. Mary's request doesn't indicate that Mary even expected a miracle of any kind.

Mary must have been helping with the wedding because after she left Jesus she told the servants, "**Do whatever He tells you!**" Here Mary is an example of faith. She had no idea what Jesus was about to do, but whatever it was, she trusted it to be the right thing.

Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "**Fill the waterpots with water! So they filled them up to the top.**" Notice that this is somewhere between 120 and 180 gallons of water and keep in mind that the servants had to draw the water from a well by hand. This is a lot of work.

Then Jesus said to them, "**Now dip some of it out, and take it to the manager of the dinner!**" Note that Jesus didn't tell the servants that the water had become wine. He simply instructed them to take some to the master of the feast.

"When the manager of the dinner had tasted the water that had been turned into wine, and did not know where it had come from, although the servants who had dipped the water out knew, the manager

called the bridegroom. **10 He told him, "Everybody else serves his good wine first, and when people have had plenty to drink, then the inferior wine. You have kept the best wine until now."** Somewhere in the process of filling the jars and taking a sample of the water to the master of the feast, the water became wine. It wasn't just any wine either. The master of the feast was surprised that the groom had waited so long to serve the good wine.

Okay ... It's nice to know Jesus has made a nice gesture to help some friends avoid an embarrassing situation. So what? Why did the Holy Spirit inspire John to include this event in His account of the Gospel? It's a nice story and all. In fact it's one of my favourites. It's kind of fun to listen to. But, in the grand scheme of eternity, why is it important?

Well, scripture interprets scripture. John himself tells us of the goal of his Gospel at the end of chapter 20 **"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."** [John 20:30–31,] Here John reveals the objective of the signs in his account of the Gospel. The signs are there in order to make the case that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. John knows that faith in Jesus receives eternal life.

The Holy Spirit inspired St John to make the point that all of Jesus' signs point to Jesus as the anointed one, the Son of God. He is the anointed one who takes away the sin of the world. He is the anointed One who takes our sin to the cross and endures the punishment our sins deserve. He is the anointed One who will give us the greatest sign ... the sign of the empty tomb of our risen Saviour.

The Holy Spirit inspired John to begin the trail of signs pointing to Jesus with the sign of Jesus changing the water into wine. John himself tells us that this is the point of this account at the end of today's reading from the Gospel. He wrote, **"Jesus performed this, as the first of His miraculous signs, at Cana in Galilee. He showed His glory, and His disciples believed in Him."**

John wants us to understand that this miracle is not just a gesture to help some family friends avoid an embarrassing situation. John informs us that this was Jesus' first sign ... the first certification that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. These signs point to the spiritual truth of the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One who took on our flesh, who lived among us, and experienced everything that we experience. They reveal Jesus, who, while fully human and like us in every way, except without sin, is also fully God. These miracles are signs that reveal Jesus for who He really is, namely, the Word made flesh, who created all things and who upholds all things in Himself. They reveal the glory of the one and only Son of God, Jesus Christ. This sign is the first of a trail of signs that will lead to the ultimate sign of the empty tomb of the risen Lord.

Jesus has not only chosen to reveal Himself to those first disciples using signs, but He has also chosen to reveal Himself to us and to come to us, in signs in which His Word resides. Jesus has chosen to reveal Himself in the signs of the proclaimed word, the word combined with water in Holy Baptism, and the word combined with bread and wine in the Holy Meal. He has given these signs to us as gifts. In these miracles, He is revealed to us. In the Sacraments, Jesus, who revealed at Cana that He is Lord of the elements, continues to reveal Himself as Lord over all creation.

In the waters of Baptism, Jesus makes us His own. By His suffering and death on the cross, He has earned the forgiveness of sins. Then by His promise and command, He joins that forgiveness to ordinary water. By His promise and command, baptism delivers the forgiveness of sins from the cross to you. For it is written, **"That ...baptism, which now saves you, not by washing dirt from the body, but by guaranteeing a good conscience before God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.** [1 Pet 3:21]. Baptism is a **"washing of regeneration"** [Titus 3:5.] Baptism is a re-creation. We were dead in sin, but Baptism re-creates us in newness of life in Christ Jesus.

In the same manner, the Lord's Supper is a sign of our redemption in Jesus Christ. Is it not written that the blood of Jesus cleanses you from sin [see 1 John 1:7] The miracle of Jesus' true body and true blood under the elements of bread and wine reveals the mystery of our salvation in a blessed and holy sacramental

union with Jesus. Jesus gives His body and His blood into our mouths and so grants us the forgiveness of sins one mouth at a time.

At the wedding celebration in Cana, our Lord revealed who He is, to servants, disciples, to us and to the world. In “this, the first of His signs,” Jesus points us to the restoration of creation that He would accomplish on the great third day, Easter morning. Through His first miracle, indeed, through all His miracles, Jesus manifested His glory and revealed to us a foretaste of what was to come: the restoration of our life in our God as it is meant to be.

Jesus has given signs to us. At Cana, at Calvary, at the empty tomb, in the font, and on the altar, Jesus gives us signs of His glory. In the font, and on the altar, our Lord has given us signs of the renewed creation won for us on the cross at Calvary. Here Jesus reveals that His life and death are ours. Jesus reveals that His body was given for us and His blood was shed for us for the remission of our sins. Jesus reveals to us His glory, the glory of His death for our righteousness. This Divine Service is His wedding party given for us. He is the groom, the wine steward, and the wine. We are the bride and the honoured guests.

Jesus has given all these signs to us so that we may believe that He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and that we might have life by believing in His name. **Amen**

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Church Second Sunday after the Epiphany

P Let us come before the throne of God’s grace and present our petitions with confidence in the Spirit through our Lord Jesus to His heavenly Father, for He is kind and full of compassion.

Brief silence

P For glad and joyful hearts, receiving the blessings of God with thanksgiving and using them wisely and for the glory of the Lord, Lord in Your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P For those troubled in spirit and those whose hearts despair of the troubles and trials of this mortal life; for the sick, the suffering, the grieving and the dying, *[especially*

], Fill each of them with a confident trust in Your mercy, and teach us all to look expectantly to the day when You will grant us permanent healing. Lord, in Your mercy, Lord in Your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P For the Church, the community of faith whom God has established by the blood of Christ, that all our leaders and those who serve us in Christ’s name may be blessed in their service and their work prospered as God wills, Lord in Your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P For this nation and those who make, administer and judge our laws; for the causes of peace and justice, here and throughout the world; for those in the armed forces who protect and defend us against our enemies; for laws that are good and just and for judges who are wise and faithful, for those who care for the sick and injured, especially doctors, nurses, technicians, and all medical workers, the police the SES and fire brigades, that they carry out their calling with joy and dedication as they seek to preserve life and care for all, protect them from evil and guide them in paths that are pleasing to You. Lord in Your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P O Heavenly Father in Your mercy strengthen all our congregations, and support them in challenging times. Make them steadfast, abounding in the work of Your Son, and let their faith and zeal for the Gospel refresh and renew the witness of Your people everywhere. Bless all our pastors and their families. Bless Your Church and all the congregations of the A.E.L.C, and ULMA in America. Lord, in Your mercy,

C Hear our prayer

P For blessing the work you give us to do to be able to support ourselves and our families, for the tithes and offerings we bring as part of our worship and symbols of our faith and trust; for our sharing this day in

the body and blood of Christ; for lives of faith and repentance, renewed by the divine Spirit that we might live to God's glory, Lord in Your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P For the grace of life and the courage to live the new and holy calling into which we have been baptized; for the faith to trust in the good and gracious will of our heavenly Father, who has promised to hear and answer His people's prayers, Lord in Your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P Remembering the faithful who have gone before us and renewing our commitment to leave to those who follow us a legacy of truth and faithfulness. Into Your hands, O Lord, we command all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.