

2 Sun Yr C 18-19

Jesus was lucky to have been baptized when he was, because as I understand it, the Jordan “river” today is in a worse state than the Murray- Darling, and for similar reasons, except for the growing of thirsty cotton crops in a similarly dry country. In the Jordan, fish have long since departed.

Speaking of water, how clean would the water have been in the six water jars used by the guests to purify themselves before the start of the wedding banquet? How clean would the jars have been when Jesus told the servants to fill them with water? Thank God he turned it into wine!

How many of those present at the wedding banquet would have known what had happened? The Chief Steward certainly didn’t know. But more importantly, how many of those present would even have known of the significance of what had happened?

Weddings then, as now, were big *do’s*.

Shelia was six years old when her mother took her to her first wedding. It was all very exciting. In the church it wasn’t long before she started asking questions. “Mum why is the lady dressed all in white?” “Well”, her mother explained, “because she’s the bride and white is the colour of joy; today is the happiest day of her life.” The child reflected on the reply for a few moments and then leaned towards her mother and whispered, “So why is the man dressed all in black?” We’re not told how her mother answered that one.

But back to the feast. The readers of John’s gospel would have recognized the meaning of the water being changed into wine. It was a sign pointing them to something else, to another meaning.

It was pointing to the messianic wedding feast. The image of feast and bridegroom was often used to describe the longed-for Messiah, come to save his people anew. The prophet Isaiah who hopefully looked to that future said,

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. Is 25:6

And from Amos,

The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. Amos 9:13

At Cana then, there is in reality, "... another Bridegroom who has supplied the best wine and made it a "sign" of a deeper reality. The miraculous gift of ordinary (albeit best) wine in abundance signals the presence here in this Galilean village wedding of Israel's Bridegroom, fulfilling the divine promise recorded in the prophet Hosea."¹

Therefore, I will now allure her, and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her.

From there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.

There she shall respond as in the days of her youth, As at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.

On that day, says the Lord you will call me "My Husband" and no longer will you call me, "My Baal".

Hos 2:14-16

For those who believe, the reality is we are loved in a very intimate way, in a relationship where our loving creator God is always faithful to the covenant, *You will be my people, I will be your God*. But at times we all know that we are less than faithful to it. We like to have affairs, flings on the side, with whatever little baal gods we create.

¹ Brendan Byrne, *Life Abounding, A reading of John's Gospel*, Strathfield NSW: St Pauls Publications, 2014, 56

Of all the people at the wedding feast, John records that only Jesus' disciples saw the sign he made, writing,
He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him. Jn 2:11

The Lord who turned water into wine also turns wine into his blood, and we believe that when we come to Mass. So what does *we believe* mean? If we read John's gospel up to this point we can appreciate what *we believe* means.

We believe when we believe God's word and when we live as creatures Jesus empowers to become 'children of God'.

We believe when we accept that God sent Jesus to 'take away the sin of the world'.

We believe when we follow Jesus and accept his invitation to 'come and see' him and 'stay with him', when we seek him and find him.

We believe when we recognise that we are totally dependent upon God and act in this dependence accepting that of ourselves we 'have no wine.'

We believe when we heed the words of Jesus' mother, the perfect disciple and 'do whatever he tells (us)'

We believe when we witness to Jesus.

We believe when we recognize the gift of the Spirit as the outpouring of God's love, revealing the glory that Jesus has as 'God the only Son who is close to the father's heart, the one sent by God to reveal him.'²

Curious then that we might be able to believe in this way yet deny that every one of us is responsible for the destruction of the Australian environment, forgetting that it is a unique part of God's creation.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures..."

² Michael Fallon, *The Gospel according to John, An Introductory Commentary*, Kensington NSW: Chevalier Press, 1998, 89.

