

Reflection adapted from Living Space commentary for Gospel of 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time (C)

Isaiah 62: 1-5, 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11, John 2: 1-11

Full commentary can be found in Living Space section of Sacred Space: www.sacredspace.ie.

“There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee..... When they ran out of wine the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ Jesus said, ‘Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews. Jesus said to the servants, ‘Fill the jars with water’, and they filled them to the brim. ‘Draw some out now’ he told them ‘and take it to the steward.’ They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into wine.The steward called the bridegroom and said, ‘ People generally serve the best wine first.....but you have kept the best wine till now.’ This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him. John 2: 1-12

One clear message of today’s readings is that the genuine Christian really knows how to enjoy life. Today’s Gospel passage comes from John and the theme of John’s Gospel is that Jesus is the source of life. Jesus says: “I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness.”

During the recent Christmas season we have seen God revealing himself through Jesus in several ways. When Jesus is born as a refugee, God reveals himself in solidarity with the poor and needy. The first people to visit him – the shepherds, are social outcasts. The “wise men” who came from “a far country” are foreigners, believers in another religion or perhaps no religion. When Jesus is baptised in the river Jordan and is filled with the Spirit of God a voice from heaven says: “This is my beloved Son”. And now, in today’s Gospel God reveals himself again when Jesus performs his first “sign”.

This story is not just about a young man who is rescued from an embarrassing situation on his wedding day. Like much of John’s writing this passage is full of symbols. The stone pots of water were for the purification required by tradition on entering a house and before eating. Through Jesus’ intervention the water is transformed into an excellent wine. This wine represents the new life, the new Way of Jesus, reminding us of the “new wine” which cannot be contained in old wineskins. Jesus’ new vision of life can only be understood by leaving behind traditional ways of thinking and acting. The extraordinary amount of wine (each jar could hold 20 or 30 gallons) is a symbol of the generosity of God and the fullness of life which he wants us to experience.

All this takes place at a wedding banquet. When we celebrate – at a wedding or any special event we usually sit down together to eat. In the scripture too, life with God is pictured as a banquet, a time to enjoy and be happy together. This wedding today reminds us of the meal we celebrate every Sunday, when we gather to share the Eucharist, as we eat and drink around the table of the Lord. And what are we celebrating? We celebrate all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ through his life, his teaching, his suffering, death and resurrection – all signs of God’s overwhelming love for us.

Mary’s part in the story is significant. It was through her sensitive awareness that Jesus came to know about the bridegroom’s predicament. She is not only the mother of Jesus. She also represents the Church. It is through the Church, through our brothers and sisters in the community that we learn about the life that God in Jesus wants us to enjoy and share with him. Through the Church we receive the help we need to lead that “full life”. Each of us with our unique gifts can help others towards fullness of life.

Pause for thought - What will I give today to help others toward enjoying a fuller and happier life?