

Second Sunday after Epiphany, 20/1/2013, Holy Trinity

John 2:1-11

Wow! This can be a reaction to the Gospel reading this morning.

What a miracle or 'sign' as John prefers to call such events throughout his Gospel.

This story is unique to John.

The wine has run out at a wedding party and Jesus' mother tells him "they have no wine".

Jesus apparently rebukes her.

Nevertheless, she tells the servants, "Do whatever he bids you".

Jesus bids the servants to fill six large stone jars with water, draw off some and take it to the banquet master.

They do so and when he tastes the water that now has become wine, he compliments the bridegroom on its excellent quality.

What is the point of this story apart from saving humiliation to the wedding family whose supplies had run out?

John notes the capacity of the six large stone jars which in our terms amounts to 800 bottles of best quality wine.

It was certainly going to be some party!

This, however, is no ordinary miracle, but a 'sign' revealing Jesus' glory.

"Glory" in this context denotes divine splendour, majesty and transcendence.

The disciples have glimpsed this through Jesus' action.

The symbolism of this abundance of wine would mean different things to different readers.

The Jewish readers would recall how wine in the Jewish Scriptures symbolised joy: it gladdened the human heart when drunk in moderation.

Also, the abundance of wine pointed to the end-time when God was expected to intervene dramatically in history.

The birth, life, teaching, miracles, signs, actions of Jesus, the Son of God surely is God intervening dramatically in history.

The Christian readers would probably see the quantity and quality of the wine as a symbol or sign of God's abundant generosity and Jesus as God's promised agent of salvation.

The promise of salvation would bring freedom and joy in the present time and a place at the heavenly banquet in the time to come.

This sign having been placed by John at the beginning of Jesus' active ministry would be seen by some as a symbol of the beginning of a new age.

This new age is coming out of that which had gone before in the writings and prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures and, in effect, is saying something like "you ain't seen nothin' yet".

The hopes and beliefs of God's people is now being made new in Jesus.

The old order is passing away and the new is beginning among us: so let us celebrate.

Others may see it as a foreshadowing of the Eucharist in which we, by the abundant grace of God, are fed with the Body and Blood of Jesus.

You can see that there are many possible interpretations of this incredible event but it seems that the most important thing is not what is done but by whom it was done.

This Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God" who brings life and joy to the wedding party when things run out.

This is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God who shows God's abundant generosity to his people and who comes to us in his superabundant grace to make all things new.

Come! Let us rejoice in the abundant generosity and grace of God who love us and who makes all things new.