

Second Sunday after Epiphany-January19, 2025

Themes for the season and today: The word epiphany literally means “to shine upon”. The season reveals who Jesus is in both his humanity and in his divinity-and in today’s Gospel Jesus turns water to wine and we learn that impressive as that feat is, it is a sign pointing beyond itself!

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, source of every blessing, you showed forth your glory and led many to faith by the works of your Son, who brought gladness and salvation to his people. Transform us by the Spirit of his love, that we may find our life together in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Gospel: John 2:1-11

Turning water to wine at the wedding at Cana is described as the first of Jesus’ signs. Through many such epiphanies, Jesus reveals that he bears God’s creative power and joyful presence into the world.

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 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 me and to you? 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 person in charge of the banquet.” So they took it. 9 When the person in charge tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), that person 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.

SERMON

Barely half way through a wedding celebration, on the third day, joy has dried up when the wine runs out. Mary sees that the hosts risk an embarrassment they might not ever live down.

Her son doesn't seem concerned. Jesus says, "so"? Maybe the family hired the wrong wedding planner. Mary sees through Jesus' very human nonchalance to his divinity. Mary turns on her heel and instructs the stewards to do what ever Jesus directs them to do. Later Jesus would tell people to do all sorts of things— like wash in a pool to receive sight, take up their sick bed and walk, unbind a resurrected Lazarus and let him go.

One dry day in Cana, the third day of a weeklong wedding, when no-one had a flask or a mini bottle on their person, out of nowhere comes a thousand bottles of wine. People with a knack for numbers using modern measures "math out" how much wine could come from all those jars of water. Lots of wine. Lots of excellent wine. The guests' palates and possibly their senses are too dulled to appreciate what they're tasting. Not even the sommelier knows the provenance of this exceptional vintage. But there it is...absurdly abundant and decadently delicious. The evangelist calls it all a sign of something transcending the wine's exquisite essence. Can we make out the sign today?

What day is it today?

Maybe today is the one foot in the past the other in the future first day.

Maybe today is only the second day when we feel as though we live on borrowed time, convinced there's only so much to go around.

Maybe today is the third day when all joy and hope have run dry. Come to think of it, some rather singular things happen on the third day.

For his part, John the Evangelist says that's exactly why he tells us the story once upon a time in Cana, when the wine ran out. And Jesus the plus one guest transforms parched nothing into sweet extravagant abundance.

