

Wednesday 17th June

John 2:1-12 The Wedding at Cana

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom 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.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there for a few days.

John referred to it as a sign, not a miracle. For John in writing his Gospel, it was an act with significance, a meaning; it was an act conveying a truth. The word "sign" led me to a song in one of my favourite musicals, Blood Brothers, by Willy Russell. Take a letter Miss Jones includes these lyrics

Take a letter, Miss Jones, quote:
I regret to inform you
That owing to circumstances right beyond our
control
It's a premature retirement
For those surplus to requirement
I'm afraid it's a sign of the times, Miss Jones
An unfortunate sign of the times

Take a letter, Miss Jones
Due to the world's situation
The shrinking pound, the global slump
And the price of oil
I'm afraid we must fire you
We no longer require you
It's just another sign of the times, Miss Jones

"An Unfortunate sign of the times," for many in our country and around the world there is truth in these words. "Circumstances beyond our control." "The world's situation."

We are living in a "Strange time" to use a phrase that has been prevalent for the last 3 months or so.

Many have faced the untimely death of a loved one; others the anxiety of a loved one having contracted Covid 19 and waiting whilst they were ill, unsure whether they would recover or not. Now many wonder what are the long-term effects for those hospitalised that pulled through.

For many now there is the prospect of unemployment which faces them, a time of water not wine. In difficult times what is the message of the Church?

We could focus on the spiritual blessing a relationship with God provides – and it does. We could proclaim the warped theology of the Prosperity Doctrine – "come to Christ and all will be well, abundant wealth, health and happiness." (Hopefully not).

The message we have to share needs to be relevant to the situation people find themselves in. In this Gospel passage we find Jesus reacting with care to the need at a wedding party; he met the need in a miraculous way. Jesus is concerned for the situations people find themselves in.

We need to notice that for the sign to be fulfilled Jesus needed the obedience of those around to play their part. How many "miracles" do not happen because the called and selected do not play their part in being obedient to the task Jesus calls them/us to?

Amongst the signs of the times we need the signs of God's grace. Could you be the one asked to fill the water jar that wine could be served? Could you be the one who can be a blessing to another through a simple act that is performed in response to a call from Jesus? Could you be the water provider that wine could be delivered ?