

Second Sunday after the Epiphany  
January 19, 2025  
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Isaiah 62:1-5  
Psalm 36:5-10  
1 Corinthians 12:1-11  
John 2:1-11

“On the third day...”

That’s how the second chapter of the Gospel of John begins.

“On the Third day...” There is significance in threes, and I believe that more is going on here than just the first of the signs at the Wedding Feast at Cana.

In the first chapter,  
after we hear about the Christ being with God at the very beginning,  
John is quizzed by the Pharisees and he witnesses to the one who is to come.

On the next day, John declares:  
‘Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’

The next day John, standing with two disciples, and, seeing Jesus, exclaims: ‘Look, here is the Lamb of God!’

Two of John’s disciples follow Jesus and invite Peter to join them.

The next day Jesus goes Galilee.

Along the way calls Philip and Nathaniel to join the other three disciples  
and they end up in Cana, where Jesus’ mother is attending a wedding. Fortunately, for the sake of the story,

Jesus and his followers are added to the guest list.

Who’s to say if adding six more men to the festivities played a part,  
but Mary, bless her, sometime in the evening looks at her son and tells him: "They have no wine."

There’s a term for the situation at the Wedding Feast at Cana – Scarcity.

**Scarcity** refers to the basic fact of life that there exists only a finite amount of resources with which to produce only limited amounts of products.

Scarcity is the world in which Isaiah tries to scratch out a hard-scrabble living. The Israelites have returned to a devastated land after their exile in Babylon. They are at the depths of depression having no hope, not unlike the ruin of Gaza and the tribulations of the Palestinians. If the Cease Fire holds, we pray, hope may come again.

In Isaiah, the prophet seeks to reassure them that eventually it will work out.  
Having enough wine is the least of their problems.

So the Spirit of Epiphany leads us to the Wedding Feast at Cana.  
This is the third of the manifestations

that make up the celebration of the Epiphany  
– the Manifestation of God into our world.

This is our witness of the joining of Heaven to Earth and Earth to Heaven  
in the bodily incarnation of God in the form of the baby Jesus.

- The first manifestation is in the Divine Star and the Wise Men, the Magi, who are led to Bethlehem and the acknowledgment of Jesus as a King  
– a birth heralded in the skies.
- The second manifestation comes at the Baptism of Jesus when the Heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends as a Dove and rests on Jesus, and the voice of God the Father resounds: “This is my son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased.”
- The third manifestation of the Epiphany comes at Cana when Jesus turns water into wine.
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This was more than just some magic trick like pulling a rabbit out of a hat  
or turning a silk kerchief into a dove.

This was a sign, and in the Gospel of John nothing is just what it appears to be: bread not just bread, wine is not just wine.

These are signs and signs are what we all seek.

I believe in the sign at Cana we find a foreshadowing of events to come  
and a metaphor for the Love of God for humanity.

In this story, the Gospel of John ties the beginning of Jesus’ ministry  
with the end of the journey,  
and the road from Cana leads to Calvary,  
and the water of Cana becomes the Crucifixion of Calvary,  
and the wine of the feast becomes the glory we savor in the resurrection.

Consider Jesus’ response to his mother’s statement “They have no wine.”  
Like a petulant boy, he says. “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?”  
And he goes on: “My hour has not yet come.”

“My hour.”

To what is Jesus referring here.

If you saw the episode in the first season of *The Chosen*,  
the statement seems to be interpreted as the time  
in which Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah through signs.  
But I believe this is something even more profound.

I believe “My hour” refers to the end of his journey,  
to the Upper Room where he will institute the Eucharist  
and equates the bread to his body and the wine to his blood.  
It will be at that evening meal that Jesus will share his request  
to be remembered in the bread and the wine as a testament to God the Father and the gift of the Son for  
the sin of the world.

So the water turns to wine and the servants fetch the steward of the feast,  
who is amazed.

He goes over to the bridegroom and remarks.

Everyone serves the good wine first  
and after they're too drunk to know the difference  
bring out the three-buck Chuck, but you have have saved the best wine for last.

I think this new equivalency of the best coming last tells us about the precession of the earlier Holy People  
who proclaimed the Kingdom of God  
before the time of Christ.

The first wines come in the lives of the Judges, the Prophets, the Kings  
and the Holy men and women who toiled to do the work of God in the World.

And now in the end of the Divine Manifestations we are served  
the best wine of all in the life of Jesus the Christ.  
That is the quality of the wine we savor as salvation in the weekly Eucharist.

You see, I believe the sheer quantity of the wine is a metaphor  
for the abundance of God's Grace in the world.

Just as the people of ancient Israel and the Palestinians of Gaza fear the scarcity they face.

So, Imagine: here we are, the richest country in the world,  
and we live in fear of scarcity.

That may be understandable, but to fear a scarcity of the Grace of God?  
That's a different matter.

It would be as if we truly believed that Heaven has limited seating  
and only the 144,000 will get in.

The story of Cana,  
the story of the absolute abundance of the best of all possible wines,  
presents a bold refusal to submit to the fear of scarcity,  
and instead preaches a lesson of divine benevolence.

It is the same metaphor that we will see in the feeding of the 5,000  
where five loaves and three fish feed so many and yet there are leftovers.

The story of Cana is a metaphor for the unheard of abundance of God's grace.

Here we have Jesus – after the wine is finished –  
giving the wedding party wine of the most exquisite quality.  
Even when we are full and our tastes dulled,  
God gives us more than we can even realize – or even appreciate.

We are given grace beyond measure every time we gather for the Eucharist.  
That's why the altar, the table is open to all  
because there is more than enough Grace to go around.  
We are called to that abundance.

There is a Celtic welcome I've used as a beckoning to the Eucharist.

It goes like this:

This is the table, not of the Church, but of the LORD.

It is made ready for those who love him  
and for those who want to love him more.

So, come, you who have much faith  
and you who have little,  
you who have been here often,  
and you who have not been here as long,  
you who have tried to follow,  
and you who have failed.

Come, because it is the LORD who invites you.

It is his will that those who want him  
should meet him here.

That is the welcome manifestation of the Divine today.

That is the message of Cana: the love of God is not a scarce commodity  
but an abundant, unconditional gift.

In that abundance we are given our mission:  
to share the Grace of God with everyone we meet in the Joy of Jesus Christ.

Amen.