

Sunday Message

2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 19 January 2025 • Psalter Week 2

IN PRAISE OF STRONG WOMEN

JOHN 2:1-11



There can be few things more embarrassing than being at a wedding and the drink runs out. Everybody is having a great time, the band is playing, the celebration is in full swing, and then, horror of horrors, the bar runs dry. Imagine the anger and embarrassment of the wedding couple when the hotel manager tells them the awful news. It wouldn't be long before it would be splashed on social media.

We can identify with the Cana couple's predicament. We all know that life isn't perfect and that we need the help of others when difficulties come our way. In today's Gospel, Mary sees the problem and asks Jesus to help. He seems reluctant to intervene, but she is not put off. Mary knows her son won't let the wedding couple down, so she instructs the servants to do whatever he tells them.

In turning the water into wine Jesus works a miracle. He gives a sign, not because he wants to show how fantastic he is, but in order to meet someone's need. It reveals something of his identity. Although he is ready to argue that his time has not yet come, when called upon to help, he cannot say no. He comes to people in their need, as he always does. ■

SAY

"Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life. You have the message of eternal life."

DO

As this New Year begins, think of something you could do to change another person's life for the better.

LEARN

Miracles happen when enough people have the faith to believe that change is possible.

Mary instructs the servants: "Do whatever he tells you." That is the meaning of discipleship - to do whatever Jesus asks of us.

PRAY

Jesus' relationship with people transforms them. It changes their lives. Pray for yourself and your parish community that you will have a deeper relationship with the Lord.

REFLECT

I come from a family of strong women. My maternal grandmother lived with us when I was growing up, and she had a tremendous influence on me. She had strong traditional values and always stressed the importance of family. She led the family prayers, and encouraged us to pray every day. She had a deep store of wisdom, which she sought to pass on to us, and a natural ability as a storyteller. Her diaries provide a wonderful insight into the Ireland of yesteryear. My grandmother taught me so much right up until she died the day after my seventeenth birthday.

Her daughter - my mother - was similar. Deep into old age, she remained the heartbeat of our family. I was astonished by her selflessness, how time and again she spent herself for others. I marvelled at her wisdom and common sense, at her ability to grow and change, how her views and outlook matured over the years. I was struck by her unwavering faith, and by her capacity to forgive, to overcome even the deepest disappointments. She was a strong woman, just like her mother before her.

The story of the wedding at Cana has many levels of meaning. It's about the abundance

of God's gifts and God's extraordinary generosity. The water jars ended up brimming over with as much as 800 litres of wine (more than would be needed even at the most rumbustious Irish wedding!).

It's about transformation, being made new. The water is changed into wine. Our challenge also is to be made new.

It's about Jesus being revealed for who he really is - the Son of God, the Messiah, the prophet who can work wonderful signs.

And it's about a strong woman who offers advice to Jesus' followers about how to live if they are to be saved. That strong woman is Mary, the mother of Jesus. She knows the wine is running out, she can see that the reception is heading for disaster for the bride and groom, and she decides to take action. She knows what to do. And even though Jesus protests that now is not the time, she refuses to take 'no' for an answer. She instructs the stewards, "Do whatever he tells you." And, like a good son, Jesus obeys his mother. He tells the stewards what to do - and the results are astonishing. The new wine is so good, the guests wonder why it wasn't served first.

"Do whatever he tells you" is what Mary tells the stewards at the wedding. It's the command she gives us too: "Do whatever he tells you." In other words, listen to Jesus, heed his word, follow his example. Do whatever he tells us, and our lives will be transformed. Do it, and we shall live.

What is Jesus asking of us this new year? Perhaps to take our lead from Mary and never to hesitate to turn to Jesus when in need. Perhaps to reach out in solidarity to those in material or financial difficulty, those who have no food, no wine. Perhaps he is asking us to look at our values and attitudes to see if they are in line with the Gospel. How might we need to be transformed, made new, in 2025? Perhaps it means never hesitating to offer a gentle word of support or comfort to someone in distress. Perhaps it means having the courage, like Mary, to speak out when we know something is wrong, whenever we encounter injustice.

"Do whatever he tells you." That's how that strong woman Mary lived. She lived by God's word. She spoke God's word. We are called to speak and live God's word, too. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*All the earth shall bow down before you, O God,
and shall sing to you,
shall sing to your name, O Most High!*

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
who govern all things,
both in heaven and on earth,
mercifully hear the pleading of your people
and bestow your peace on our times.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 62:1-5

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.
The nations shall see your righteousness,
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married;
for the LORD delights in you,
and your land shall be married.
For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your sons marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 96(95):1-2a, 2b-3, 7-8a, 9-10ac, R. 3

R: Proclaim the wonders of the Lord among all the peoples.

1. O sing a new song to the LORD;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
O sing to the LORD; bless his name. *R.*
2. Proclaim his salvation day by day.
Tell among the nations his glory,
and his wonders among all the peoples. *R.*
3. Ascribe to the LORD, you families of peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and power;
ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name. *R.*
4. Worship the LORD in holy splendour.
O tremble before him, all the earth.
Say to the nations, 'The LORD is king.'
He will judge the peoples in fairness. *R.*

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who

empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:14

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

God called us through the gospel,
so that we may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL John 2:1-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding seventy or one hundred litres. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.' So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.' This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant us, O Lord, we pray,
that we may participate worthily in these mysteries,
for whenever the memorial of this sacrifice is celebrated
the work of our redemption is accomplished.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*You have prepared a table before me,
and how precious is the chalice that quenches my thirst.*

Or

*We have come to know and to believe
in the love that God has for us.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Pour on us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love,
and in your kindness
make those you have nourished
by this one heavenly Bread
one in mind and heart.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.