



Sunday Reflection

Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 16 January 2022

Epiphany 2

Today, in the midst of our difficulties and joys, we are called to hear Jesus' voice, so let us celebrate God's saving love for us and all creation.

Reflection for this week's Gospel teaching

"Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him."

John 2:11

An Illustration to set the scene

In the TV series *Don't Tell the Bride*, a couple is given a certain amount of money to spend on their wedding.

But there's a catch, which is that the groom must plan every detail while his bride-to-be is kept totally in the dark.

It must be said that the show relies heavily on stereotypes.

On the one hand the groom is generally portrayed as hapless, disorganised, more interested in partying with the best man than in arranging his nuptials.

In one episode, oblivious to the fact that her fiancé is planning a heavy-metal-themed reception in a working men's club, or that he's arranging for her to arrive on a tractor, or even to sky-dive in to the reception, the bride-to-be, together with her mother and bridesmaids, visits a romantic castle which, she says, would be her dream reception venue.

She becomes tearful at the prospect of not getting what she wants, saying: *"He ought to know me well enough to know that this is the kind of thing I want on my wedding day."*

Next the bridal party visit a wedding-dress shop, where she tries on a dress and declares it to be perfect, while the groom and his friends, looking distinctly out of place in a shop the other side of town, choose a gown that's exactly the opposite of the one his fiancée wants.

Looking at the teaching of the Gospel

Our Gospel reading from John today presents a snapshot of a wedding, although we hear nothing about the couple whose union is the cause for celebration.

Yet, though it took place two thousand years ago, in a place far away, with customs radically different from those we know, we can imagine ourselves among the invited guests for a special day of shared joy.

Perhaps it seems a bit strange that the Son of God chose the secular part of the celebration to perform his first recorded public miracle.

But this draws us into a deeper understanding of the presence of God's glory in every aspect of life, and the Spirit made manifest through the signs, symbols and metaphors of wine and water, love and celebration.

But there's far more to be celebrated about this wedding than the union of two people, joyful though that is.

It marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry, three years of teaching and working wonders, and one of the first times when God's Son is recognised.

This is evident in his mother's prompt reaction to his somewhat abrupt address to her and in the servants' obedient response to his command, filling the water jars not just enough but **"up to the brim"**, and pouring out of the wine according to his instructions.

There is an authority about this man, which marks him out from others.

How can we reflect on the application to our lives?

As we've seen, rightly or wrongly, *Don't Tell the Bride* trades on stereotypes as a form of light entertainment.

You may find it unhelpful in terms of gender equality that men and women are portrayed in this way, or you may think it's just a bit of harmless fun.

The point is not to critique any particular show, so much as to demonstrate how easily we resort to stereotypes.

The guests at the wedding at Cana – where the practice of serving the good wine first was upturned – were witnesses to the start of a ministry in which all manner of traditions and stereotypes would be radically challenged and ideas about the place of people in society according to race, gender, ability or social status would be blown out of the water.

Jesus would consort with and reach out to women deemed to have sexually transgressed, ostracised tax collectors and those considered to be ritually unclean.

If we are to follow his example, then, we need to be vigilant, ensuring that we see and treat others for what they are – fully rounded, flesh-and-blood children of God and, as such, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The wedding at Cana also foreshadows the Eucharist – our own celebration of God working miracles in our lives.

Here today, as we prepare to share, we are reminded that we are all – regardless of social status – invited into communion with God and one another.

“Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.”

John 2:11

Please share your response to this reflection to Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God’ spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

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