

WATER TO WINE  
Matins homily [written in oral form]

John 2:1-11  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany, Year C

January 20, 2019  
Gordon Allaby

The John text is a peculiar passage, featuring Jesus turning water to wine as his first Messiah miracle.  
~~~~~

In many ways, the church has been trying to change it back.  
~~~~~

We must not focus on the novelty miracle, because this story introduces the Messiah and the message in a powerfully, creative manner.

Jesus takes on the role of Messiah, revealing that he came to change everything. A new age is introduced.... that replaces the panoply of purification rites. The Christ way sets forth that No longer should *the-select-few* exclude others and demand conformity.  
~~~~~

Sadly, the church, too often, tries to undo this miracle and message.  
~~~~~

According to John, after Jesus chose and gathered his disciples, the First thing they did, collectively, was go to a party – a wedding party.  
In those days, wedding parties were an all day affair.

Jewish wedding feasts were BIG events, especially for small towns, and most everyone was invited to those most joyous and important family celebrations,..... even the heathens and pagans.

However, the pagans and heathens had to be purified before THEY could enter.

Large jars of water for that purpose were located by the entrance, and the host would likely evaluate the arriving guests– based on reputation, rumours and appearances,... and..then state if they needed to be purified or not.

The “Impure” would be directed to dip their arms into the large jars [ ], and somehow this made them pure.  
*At least THEY washed their hands before they ate.*

No doubt, after a few dirty pagans, the purification water would become rather..... tainted.....,..... ironic, don't you think?  
~~~~~

All was well at this party, UNTIL, for some reason–bad planning, too many guests who failed to bring the customary bottle.... or ... too much consumption..., whatever the cause,..... THEY RAN OUT OF WINE: a social faux pas.

Mary, displaying ownership for the grievous error, confronts Jesus, and like a mother giving a directive to a son, declares, "THEY HAVE NO WINE!!"

Suddenly, Jesus is presented as the Messiah. He differentiated himself when he addressed his mother as "WOMAN."

We are given a hint, that Jesus didn't think it was quite yet the time. However, Mary, demonstrating her faith in her Messiah son, tells the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." "Do whatever he tells you."

**The servants:** They didn't get to share in the celebration. Their only hope was to partake of what was leftover / the afterwards / the cheap wine, but..... in this case, no wine was left at all. It seemed that they were out of luck / left out.

*Bear in mind the symbolism. Old Testament writings often used wine to represent JOY. Thus, the JOY ran out..... especially for the under-privileged and powerless.*

There is a "justice" aspect to this story

~~~~~

Apparently, Jesus thought, "If I am to intercede, then it will NOT be based on rank or status, but it will be for ALL. There will be quality abundance for all." He was not going to pander or cut corners.

~~~~~

Jesus told the servants, paraphrasing, "See those six huge stone jars of water used for the rite of purification; Fill them to the brim!"

This would render the jars useless. No one could dip into them without causing a great mess. They would be too full to use. A hand couldn't be put in without displacing water onto the floor.

In essence: NO more would anyone labelled impure or inferior have to go through the humiliating procedure to be "superficially" accepted. Under Jesus' terms, No ONE would have to conform to the ruling elite.

All are accepted.

~~~~~

Then, Jesus instructed, "Draw some water. The Greek word used here refers to "drawing" water from a well or a spring: a flowing, abundant source. It doesn't mean pouring out water from the jars. There is the allusion that the jars will remain full.

~~~~~

The servants did as they were instructed, and took the "water"— a mix of fresh and very dirty water, .. to the head caterer.

*The jars of that time were typically glazed red, so it is NOT surprising that NO ONE noticed the change.*

The servants knew where the liquid came from, but did not know HOW it was changed, ..... and.... neither do we!

~~~~~

*\* When we respond and receive the touch of the divine, we don't know how the change happens. We just experience it!*

Heeding and responding to the words of Jesus.... brings change—Amazing change!

~~~~~

The head caterer was astonished: the liquid was a very fine “vintage” wine. *Evidently, Jesus knew how to make quality wine.*

The caterer, also, commented on how extraordinary it was to save the BEST for last. Instead of trying to impress the sober elite guests with the best first, ... the best was saved for last, for ALL to enjoy.

The text states that Jesus changed the water to wine to reveal: to reveal Glory—significance, majesty, splendour; to reveal.... to the disciples who he, Jesus the Messiah, was....WHO HE REALLY WAS.

And, they were changed: **THEY BELIEVED!**

~~~~~

Dirty water that humiliated the lowly was transformed into wonder and beauty for all. All are invited to receive the JOY in Christ.

There are no border checks, ... no screening either.

Christ's way means we don't own the land,...and we don't own the church. All are welcome.... All are accepted.

We believe and follow.

We believe and follow

In a moment, we will have communion. We will remember and celebrate the New Age.....thanks be to Christ.