

## The Wedding at Cana

On our liturgical journey since November, we have found ourselves in the footsteps of the early church. On a journey whose climax is the central confession of the Christian faith: the confession that Jesus is at once human and divine. That in him is the revelation – the Epiphany – of God. ‘We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,’ we say in the creed:

the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.’

John’s purpose in writing his Gospel story this morning, his story of the wedding at Cana, is to reveal this very reality: to reveal that the man Jesus is God. For this reason he concludes with the words: ‘Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.’ The renowned Johannine commentator Raymond Brown writes that just as ‘the Israel of the Old Testament saw the glory of God in the vision of the ladder, so the Israel of the New Testament will see the glory of the Son of Man in the miracle of Cana.’

The ‘glory of the Son of Man’. It is a phrase we come across again and again in John. In this phrase, the Greek philosophical idea of the glory—the epiphany, the revelation—of God in one man, Jesus, is placed within the broader Jewish tradition that looked towards the coming of the Son of Man in fulfilment of

Daniel's promise. The 'glory of the Son of Man' is a statement of Jesus' identity. Of his kingship. Of his authority.

The world of the Bible – for the Hebrews and for John – is a symbolic world. Symbols convey the final meaning of things: the meaning of human life; the meaning of the divine life; the meaning of their joining. In the world of the bible, the symbol of a wedding is a symbol of God's kingdom, rich with the imagery of celebration, feasting, hospitality, joy, abundance, hope for the future. It is especially apt, then, that Jesus' first miracle—the miracle that reveals to the world who he truly is—should take place at a wedding. At an event at which the lives of a man and a woman are joined together, we see revealed the joining of the human and the divine in the person of Jesus, the joining of heaven and earth in the kingdom of God, where we feast, in the words of the psalmist, 'upon the abundance of your house', and 'drink from the river of your delights'. And where we experience the vindication that Isaiah foresees, in which the whole of creation is joined forever to its creator, in which forsakenness and desolation are replaced with rejoicing and delight:

'but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her ...  
for the Lord delights in you ...  
For as a young man marries a young woman,  
so shall your builder marry you,  
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
so shall your God rejoice over you.'

The coming of God into the world was a miracle. But a miracle, as the German Protestant theologian Schleiermacher said, is simply the religious name for an event.

Yesterday's wedding, between Simon and Patricia, was a miracle.

As recently as November, attendance at weddings was limited to 50 guests. With the State Government COVID-zero policy still showing no clear sign of abating, I asked Simon and Patricia what they would like to do. I recall Patricia's answer. 'I have faith that things will change. That numbers will increase. I think we should go ahead.' And there we were yesterday, with more than a hundred people, with COVIDsafe restrictions. The first wedding here in two years. With today's Gospel, the miracle at Cana. Miracle, is simply the religious name for an event.

Marriage, too, is a miracle. As two, become one. As Simon and Patricia were united, once and for all, in a magnificent, mystical, magical, union. In a lifelong, faithful relationship, that is the fulfilment of their individual lives. Its sublime heights, there to bring to fulfilment their individual existence, spirituality, and personality. There to bring to fulfilment the equality, of both male and female.

Yesterday's wedding, between Simon and Patricia, was a miracle. The problem is not with the miracle. The problem is that our minds have become too dulled, by routine, and a utilitarian approach to life, to grasp the miracle of everyday life in this world. The miracle of a lifelong, faithful, marriage.

For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,  
in sickness and in health, so long as we all shall live

All is miracle. The miracle of our normal, everyday life, that is the miracle of creation. The miracle of the reconciliation of this world, in the once for all event of Christ. That is the gift of peace. In a world, in need of peace.

The font of this miraculous life, is the love of God. The miracle, astounds us. The love, sustains us. The miracle, the love, convert us. From the meaningless of life in a secular world. To a meaningful life, in a world of God. The love of God makes the world go around. The world that is charged with the grandeur of God. That is filled to overflowing, with the love of God.

Of this love of God, the Apostle Paul tells us, that:

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

It is this love of God for the world, that calls us, to love our neighbours. To love others, as we ourselves are loved. First in the church, then in the world.

This love of God is what unites us. That binds us together, in the bonds of peace and love. There is no room for division, or undermining, or self-seeking, within the Christian church. There is room only for love, that binds us to God, and to one another, come hell or high water.

Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.