

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME [C]

Isaiah 62: 1 - 5

1 Corinthians 12: 4 - 11

John 2: 1 - 11

A couple of years ago I was invited to the Induction of an Anglican Priest into his new Parish, and afterwards there was a party for the large congregation.

I walked into the hall, looked around the tables full of food, but only saw cups for tea or coffee, and glasses for fruit juice or squash.

It wasn't that the wine had run out: there was no wine in the first place!!

I don't think you'd find that to be so at any party in our Parish or Pastoral Area!!

In the Bible, the vine is a sign and symbol of the fullness, and richness of God's blessings, and His Kingdom.

In his Gospel, Luke records that Jesus told the parable of the tenants of a vineyard.

The landowner: "Planted a vineyard, and leased it to tenant farmers. At the time of the grape harvest, he sent one of his servants to collect his share of the crop. But the farmers attacked the servant, beat him up, and sent him back empty-handed." Lk. 20: 9 - 10

Again and again the owner sent his servants to collect his share of the harvest but they were beaten, and thrown out too.

Lastly he said: "I know! I'll send my cherished son. Surely they will respect him."

Lk. 20: 13

But they didn't: "They dragged him out of the vineyard and murdered him."

Lk. 20: 15

And Jesus ends the parable by saying that the owner of the vineyard will take it away from those tenants, and give it to others who will bear rich fruit.

The People of God were the apple of God's eye, and He'd chosen them out of all creation to bear witness to His love for them.

He'd given them the Promised Land, symbolised by the vineyard, and sent His Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the others to exhort them to produce the fruit He expected of them.

But they beat, and abused the Prophets, and all the people produced were: "Sour grapes." Jer. 31:29

Lastly God sent His: "Cherished son" to His vineyard, but they wouldn't listen to Him either.

Indeed, they did worse than that - they killed Him - so that they could do whatever they liked with the Lord's vineyard.

But the Lord took His vineyard from them, and give it to a people who would produce the right fruit.

We are the people to whom the Lord has gifted His vineyard, but we have to: "Go and bear fruit—fruit that will last." Jn. 15: 16

That command the Lord gives to us comes from John 15, at the beginning of which Jesus says: "I am the true vine." Jn. 15: 1

This is a very important statement by Jesus. It's one of the seven 'I AM' statements Jesus makes about Himself in John's Gospel.

'I AM' is the English translation of God's personal name, which the Lord God revealed to Moses at the burning bush in Genesis 3.

'YAHWEH' - 'I AM.' See Gen. 3: 14

Only God has the right to use that name.

So, for Jesus to apply it to Himself in this way was, and still is - to the Jews who heard Him use it - blasphemy.

He is the true vine at the heart of His Father's vineyard, which is now His Church.

And Jesus says to us, His Church: “Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.” Jn. 15: 4

Jesus, the true vine, comes to a marriage at Cana where the wine - the fruit of the vine - has run out.

Symbolic of the spiritual, and moral bankruptcy into which His people had fallen because they'd turned away from the Lord God.

His Mother, being a woman, is of course the first to notice that the wine has run out, and tells Jesus.

His reply to her: “Woman, why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come.” Jn. 2: 4 might sound like a rude rebuff, until we get behind the words.

Jesus, by calling His Mother, ‘Woman,’ instead of ‘Mum,’ takes us back to Eve in the Creation account in Genesis.

The name Eve simply means Woman: “Because she would become the mother of all the living.” Gen. 3: 20

Jesus, by calling Mary ‘Woman’ is saying that she’s the new Eve who brought Jesus, the true vine, into the world.

Eve - and Adam - gave into the tempting of the Evil One, and turned away from God; and so sin and death entered into creation.

Mary, the new Eve, turns to Jesus her Son, the new Adam, the: “Word made flesh.”

Jn. 1: 14 and tells the servants: “Do whatever he tells you.” Jn. 2: 5

The devastating consequences of The Temptation and Fall in the Garden begin to unravel at the Wedding at Cana.

Jesus tells Mary that His hour has not yet come, and the clue to the meaning of the Lord’s words are there right at the beginning of today’s Gospel with the words: “On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee.” Jn. 2: 1

On one level, it’s the third day after the events recorded in the previous chapter.

Yet on a much deeper, and profound level it takes us forward to the Lord’s Death and Resurrection.

That’s the ‘hour,’ when He rises from the dead, in which His true identity is revealed. Jesus anticipates that ‘hour’ by doing what his Mother asks of Him at Cana; by turning water into wine.

And, if we look at the moment in John’s Gospel after Jesus dies on the Cross, we’ll see that: “One of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.” Jn. 19: 33

At that moment the Church was born from the side of Jesus, and our salvation was accomplished.

Until He comes again in glory, by the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, the elements of water and wine are transformed into the water and blood, which flowed from the side of Christ to give us eternal life in Him, now and eternally.

In writing his Gospel John very carefully refers to the miracles Jesus performs as ‘signs.’ He calls them: “Signs through which he revealed his glory.” Jn. 2: 11 because they point us beyond themselves to the true spiritual reality they embody.

They’re not illusions. Neither are they inventions of the Gospel writer who, as we might think, came from a more primitive time than ours, didn’t understand science as we do, so was duped into believing they actually happened.

I think that’s just our arrogant 21st. Century mind-set that thinks science can explain everything and theology explains nothing, and is only in the business of peddling the ‘God Delusion.’

But Pope Benedict has emphatically rejected that notion by stating that: “Theology is a spiritual science.”

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger: Principles of Catholic Theology, 1987; p. 321 - 322

“He says: theology is a *spiritual science*. [Because] Theology is the scientific study of things of the Spirit - it is ultimately about God, who is Spirit.”

Scott Hahn: Covenant and Communion, 2009; p. 72

And: “God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Jn. 4: 24

Worship Him in the spirit of the truth that Jesus is our Lord and God.

He is ‘I AM,’ the One True God.

Because we’re all called: “To experience a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes [us] holy and through [our] belief in the truth. [So that] now [we] can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thess. 2: 13 - 14

In order to do be able to do that, may we take to heart, and act upon, the words Mary spoke to the servants at the Wedding at Cana: “Do whatever he tells you.” Jn. 2: 5