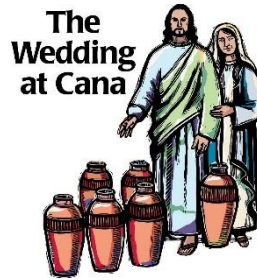


Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton and Hollybush



3rd Sunday of Epiphany

Welcome-do have a candle, glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready

HYMN

OPENING PRAYER

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all
and also with you.

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts. In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.**

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**We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
 For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
 forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in
 newness of life to the glory of your name.
 Amen.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,
 have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
 confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

**Glory to God in the highest,
 and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
 almighty God and Father,
 we worship you, we give you thanks,
 we praise you for your glory.
 Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
 Lord God, Lamb of God,
 you take away the sin of the world:
 have mercy on us;
 you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
 receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
 you alone are the Lord,
 you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
 with the Holy Spirit,
 in the glory of God the Father.
 Amen.**

THE COLLECT

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
 the wonder of your saving presence:
 renew your people with your heavenly grace,
 and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power;

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through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

READINGS : Revelation 19:6-10, John 2:1-11

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(Please read Genesis 14:17-20 at home)

REFLECTION

That remarkable story of the wedding at Cana only appears in John's Gospel, and as we've just heard, for John it marks the beginning of Jesus ministry, the point at which his disciples suddenly sat up, took notice and began to realise that here was no ordinary teacher and preacher, but someone who could transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.

One of the many things which intrigue me about this story is the role his mother Mary plays in it. Is she being the stereotypical Jewish mother, pushing her boy forward into the limelight even though his initial response is; "Dear woman, why do you involve me, my time has not yet come?" Or is she being an obedient servant of God, his messenger and prompter, hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit, remembering the message of the Angel Gabriel, all those strange visitors in the stable, the prophesy of Simeon, that frightening time when they lost Jesus for a few days and then found him in the temple, his Father's House. We're always told that Mary pondered all these things in her heart. Maybe this was the time when all that pondering matured into action, resulting in her giving Jesus that final nudge that said, actually son, your time has come, get on with it! Because most of us generally need that nudge from someone else. Others see things in us that we can't always see for ourselves, and we can do the same for them. Always be on the lookout for the potential for the extraordinary. Jesus was an ordinary Jewish man for the first 30 years of his life, he became an extraordinary teacher, healer and preacher from this moment on. It takes time for wine to mature, it takes time for us to grow into the people God made us to be – but with help from those who inspire and guide us, we get there.

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When Jesus accepts that he does need to act, to accept his destiny and his identity, he doesn't do things by halves. Doesn't produce another glass of wine, or even a few bottles of wine, no he produces somewhere between 120 and 180 gallons of wine – that's quite some wedding party. And remember this wasn't any old plonk, this was the good stuff, the saving the best til last stuff. Was Jesus not aware of the government guidance on alcohol units??? But this isn't about units, or even about wine, it's about God's amazing generosity, his ever re-filling glass of love for humanity, for his entire creation. God loved us so much that he sent his only begotten Son to save us from our sins. God literally loved us to death, the death of his Son on the cross, that sacrificial act of self-giving that knew no bounds.

Maybe that's why his first miracle was at a wedding, that joyous occasion when two people publicly commit themselves to love and to cherish each other for better, for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, til death do them part. With this miracle, Jesus commits himself to love all of creation no matter how much they abuse and reject him, misunderstand and persecute him, his abundant, generous, self-giving love for us continued til death and beyond. And in our reading from the Book of Revelation, we hear the angel say "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage feast of the Lamb." Jesus is the Lamb of God, the bridegroom, traditionally the Church is seen as his bride, but we are all called to be guests at the marriage feast, all called to be recipients of God's amazing abundant love, personified in Jesus Christ.

But what does it mean, to be loved by God, what difference does it make to our everyday lives, particularly in times such as these, when we don't feel particularly loved or cherished in a world beset by Covid, effecting every part of our lives and causing such pain and grief to so many? I'd say its like the difference between water and wine. Water is vital to life on our planet, without it we can't survive. Water is also needed for cleansing. The stone jars Jesus commandeered for his miracle were not for drinking purposes but for cleansing, purification, making all things clean and new. Water equals creation, water equals forgiveness from our sins, a new start just as in baptism. But that's not all that God wants for us. Jesus came to bring life in **all** its fullness, times of great rejoicing and celebration to inspire us, times of pain and hardship to strengthen and mature us, giving us the wisdom we need to help others through their tough times. Wine requires skill and time – skill from the grower, from the press, from the time it spends in the cellar maturing – and as it

matures it grows in depth of colour and flavour. And as we live our lives we hopefully mature, learn, become changed by the love of God, by the life of Christ and by the action of the Holy Spirit, til we are full bodied, full flavoured followers of Christ.

In many ways, this Covid life we are living at the moment in lockdown is a life of water – we live, we exist, we survive but we don't thrive, we miss out on many of those things that give life depth, that make it worth living – family, friends, community. God gave us the water of life, Jesus came to bring us the wine of salvation, to bring life in all its fullness to those who believe in him. He transformed an ordinary, everyday, substance of water into exceptionally high-quality wine. In the same way, God can transform us through the very hard times we are going through into a people who realise afresh the value of family, of friendship, of community, who cherish the acts of kindness and generosity we see all around us, who will remember the self-sacrificing service of all of our keyworkers, and who have learned that spending time outdoors enjoying God's creation is a tonic for the soul. When we have come through this – and we will – it will have tested us, it will have changed us, but I think we will emerge through the waters of trial and tragedy to be the wine of restoration and revival. Because the other thing we learn from this story is that man's resources of love may run out, but God's abundant, generous, transforming love keeps going forever.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Please ask for any additional prayers

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us.

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done ;**

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in earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.
 And lead us not into temptation;
 but deliver us from evil;
 for thine is the kingdom,
 the power and the glory,
 for ever and ever.
 Amen.

THE PEACE

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.
 He is Christ the Saviour and his name shall be called 'The Prince of Peace'. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
 and also with you.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.
 I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
 Amen.

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this bread to set before you,
which earth has given and human hands have made.

It will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
through your goodness
we have this wine to set before you,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.
It will become for us the cup of salvation.

Blessed be God for ever.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator,
ever-living God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who for love of our fallen race humbled himself,
was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Spirit,
and lived as one of us.

In this mystery of the Word made flesh
you have caused his light to shine in our hearts,
to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

In him we see our God made visible
and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven
we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name
and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
 God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.**

Father of all, we give you thanks for every gift that comes from heaven.

To the darkness Jesus came as your light.
 With signs of faith and words of hope
 he touched untouchables with love
 and washed the guilty clean.

The crowds came out to see your Son,
 yet at the end they turned on him.

On the night he was betrayed
 he came to table with his friends
 to celebrate the freedom of your people.
 Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food;
 he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
 This is my body, given for you all.

Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;
 he took the cup, gave it and said:
 This is my blood, shed for you all for the forgiveness of sins.
 Do this in remembrance of me.

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup
 we celebrate the cross on which he died to set us free.
 Defying death he rose again
 and is alive with you to plead for us and all the world.

Send your Spirit on us now that by these gifts we may feed on Christ
 with opened eyes and hearts on fire.

May we and all who share this food offer ourselves to live for you
 and be welcomed at your feast in heaven where all creation worships
 you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast

(consume)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Almighty Father,
whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world:
may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments,
shine with the radiance of his glory,
that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed
to the ends of the earth;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.
Amen.

**We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this physical and
spiritual sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste
of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples. Amen.**

HYMN

THE BLESSING

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory
and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen