

“They have no wine.” With those words Mary speaks a truth about our lives, a truth that at some point we all experience. A truth you and I are perhaps experiencing right now. I’m not talking about your cellar or wine rack being empty – that is certainly not likely to happen at the Vicarage anytime soon or else home schooling would not happen! But... there comes a day when the wine gives out. The glass is empty. The party is over. On that day life seems empty and dry. There is no vibrancy or vitality. Nothing is growing or fermenting within us. Our world is colourless and tasteless. The bouquet of life is absent and we are living less than fully alive.

Mary’s words hold before us some serious questions and wonderings. Where has the wine of our life given out? What relationships have run dry? What parts of us remain empty? Or is this simply because we are in a pandemic and unable to do what we would normally do: socialise? relate? connect?

Each of us could tell a story about the day the wine gave out. It might be about the death of a loved one or the loss of a friendship or marriage. Some will speak about their search for love and acceptance. Some will describe their thirst for meaning and significance. Others will tell of their guilt, disappointments, or regrets. Many of the stories will be about fear of what is or what might be. Stories of failure and self-doubt abound. Some will describe a longing and desire for something they cannot name or describe. The storyline of unanswered prayer, doubts, or questions is known by most. They are not all stories from the past, however. Some of us are living those stories today.

Behind each of our stories is the hope and desire for a wedding of our life. We come to the wedding at Cana not simply as guests and spectators, but as participants, as a bride or groom, seeking union, intimacy, and wholeness.

Despite our best efforts, good intentions, and hard work, however, it seems that the wine of our life is not always plentiful but has in fact given out. No matter how often we refill it our glass remains empty. There is never enough wine. As the day wears on we become increasingly aware that we cannot replenish the wine from our own resources. And that day seems like a disaster, an embarrassment, a failure. That must have been what it was like for the bride and groom at the wedding in Cana. “They have no wine,” Mary tells Jesus. That is not a condemnation or judgment but simply an observation, a diagnosis.

This is not about the wine but about the people. It is a statement about the human condition. It is about you and me as much as it is about the wedding in Cana of Galilee. It is, if you will pardon the pun, a spiritual condition. It is about our inner life, our way of being, more than the circumstances outside us.

Too often we live with the illusion of our own self-reliance and sufficiency. That illusion is shattered on the day the wine runs out and the jars of our life stand empty and dry. That day confronts us with a new truth as old as creation itself. We are the recipients and not the creators of our life. We were never intended nor expected to live by the sufficiency of our own resources. Christ is the true vintner and chief steward of our lives.

Regardless of how it feels or what we think about it, the day the wine runs out is the beginning of a miracle. Christ does not simply refill our glasses. He transforms our lives, turning water into wine. It is, after all, the third day, the day of resurrection and new life. That which was colourless is now

vibrant red. That which had no taste now tingles the tongue. That which had no fragrance now has a full bouquet. That which had no life is now fermenting, active, and alive.

On the third day our lives are filled to the brim with the good wine; intoxicating us with the life of God, inebriating us with the blood of Christ, and leaving us under the influence of the Holy Spirit. That's the miracle at Cana and it has never ceased happening. Every moment of every day Christ pours himself into the empty jars of our life. He is the good wine; extravagant, abundant, endless.

Every time that good wine is poured our lives are changed and transformed. We are brought "out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life" (*Book of Common Prayer*) I can't tell you how that happens. I don't know how it happens. I only know that it does happen. I have tasted the good wine. I have experienced the miracle at Cana in my life and seen it in the lives of others. I have experienced moments when death is turned into life, sorrow into joy, and despair into hope. I have seen that happen in the lives of others. I have been surprised by fear that was transformed into courage and seen people do things they never thought possible. I have watched empty lives be filled back up. I know of broken marriages that became vibrant and life-giving.

Those and a thousand others like them are the miracles of Cana. Those are moments Christ's glory is revealed and we are illumined, shining with the radiance of his glory. His glory becomes ours, two lives - one glory, transformed by the nature of his grace.

"They have no wine," Mary said. But they will. The miracle always begins when the wine gives out. May our prayer be as last week:

Almighty God,
in Christ you make all things new:
transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.