



St Marylebone  
Parish Church

## **BCP Holy Communion 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday After Epiphany**

Best. Miracle. Ever. There is so much to enjoy here.

I have never yet run out of booze. I think I would immediately resign my orders to the Bishop of London. No Church of England clergyman could cope with the shame...

And in the face of such an embarrassment Jesus performs his first miracle. A little aside before we jump in. This first miracle seems to be a little early, even. Jesus is very concerned in the Gospels that the timing of each stage must be right: according to God's plan, and in line with ancient prophecies and unfolding events. It is His mother that lovingly, trustingly, (but as mothers do!) forces His hand. Hence the sharp exchange between them in St John's account. Perhaps in a culture where domineering parents can possess and control their children, this is a healthy balance?

So, He turn jars of water for the *ritual cleansing* into gallons and gallons of wine, for a *party*. Behold, this is our God. A God of generosity and joy. Look above us. The vision of heaven that St John gives us in Revelation (at the back of the New Testament), depicted in our apse, is the whole world summoned to an eternal celebration – joy and singing.

As Epiphany continues to unfold:

- A month ago. We have the eternal God become a tiny helpless baby so that He could be with us.
- A fortnight ago. We have seen gentiles (in the form of the Magi) come and acknowledge that this salvation is not just for the Jewish people but us and the whole world.
- Last week. We have seen the boy Jesus already fulfilling ancient prophecies, teaching in the Temple: He is the one for whom we have been waiting since the world began.

And now this season of revelation zooms forward to His first miracle, now an adult. And what a beginning!

A couple of things to say in response to this.

One is, the Christian faith is an invitation to this party. To start living it now, so that when we die (Jesus having defeated death) we carry on through into the joy and celebration of the court of the King. This is the faith we live and share. St Paul talks in today's Epistle about hospitality, blessings, forbearance, mercy, faith, doing honour to one another, fervency, patience, humility. These are the customs of this party, and these things usher in true joy when they are done with Jesus – not the shallow sparkles that so much in our world uses to hide greed and fear and ego and the rest.

Let's come to the banquet. Not pineapple and cheese cocktail sticks, not even tiny sausages or vol-au-vent, sorry. So, so much more. An overflowing cup – the wine that is His Blood. Bread, His Body, given out until all are fed, not 5,000 but the whole world and there is always more.

Another aside: St John himself gives us lots of clues that in his account of the miracle of water into wine at Wedding Feast at Cana and the feeding of the 5,000 – he is talking about the Eucharist. In John's Gospel these two stories *are* his exposition on the Last Supper and Holy Communion.

'His mother saith unto the servants (that's us) Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it'. And He saith, come to the party.

To make the Eucharist the heart of our week – the structure by which our lives are lived out is to make heaven our pattern and purpose. To make the joy, hope and love that God wants for us the pavement under our feet.

It takes perseverance and sacrifice – but so does anything worth having, and nothing is more valuable than this.

God gives His life to us here in this way, that anticipates and foreshadows the everlasting life that He will give us. Here the party of heaven breaks through, *there* we won't be able to keep our feet from the dancefloor. Our calling, is to begin now as we mean to go on. Come to the party.