

SUNDAY PLUS

Worth the wait

The unexpected gift

by Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

Running out of wine at a wedding feast is hardly a life-or-death situation: inconvenient and embarrassing, yes, but not an enduring calamity, except that the family's shame might eclipse other memories of the feast. In his Gospel John chooses this troubled domestic scene to celebrate the story of Jesus' first great sign, one that reveals his glory and leads the disciples to believe in him.

Mary instructs the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them. It seems strange for a guest to instruct the household servants but if Mary is a close family relative, this would not

be out of place. Clearly Mary expects her son to rise to the occasion, believing that he can turn poverty into plenty.

While there is no wine, there is an abundance of water in six stone jars for the Jewish ritual of purification. Jesus decides to save this distressing situation and tells the servants to fill these to the brim; after doing this they discover that the water has been changed into wine – all one hundred and twenty gallons. When the steward tastes it he compliments the bridegroom for keeping the best wine until last – an unusual practice for wedding feasts which could last for days.

The story gives us a marvellous image of the loving relationship we have with God through Jesus. Jesus is ungrudging and bountiful in the

gifts he offers. As John wrote in the Prologue to his Gospel: "Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received" (John 1:16). This is demonstrated beautifully at the wedding feast when Jesus offers not a carafe of *vin ordinaire* but gallons of the finest vintage. With him there is always plenty.

Fr Denis McBride's many CDs, DVDs and books are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

The neo-gothic fresco of Jesus' miracle in Cana by Leopold Bruckner (1905 - 1906) in Saint Nicholas Church, Trnava, Slovakia. Renata Sedmakova / Shutterstock.com



It makes sense

by Paul Nizinskyj

Delayed gratification is on the wane in our society. Decades ago we worried about fast food, easy credit, and twenty-four hour news. These days, psychologists worry about the instant "buzz" of social media warping young minds. The ultimate emptiness of these quick fixes should remind us that good things come, not only to those who wait, but often through hardship and difficulty.

As Catholics we are used to reflecting on the slow unfolding of mystery. We wait penitently for the Messiah at Advent, and again for his death and resurrection during Lent. We know salvation came only after centuries of waiting and through the ultimate sacrifice of the cross. But, as people, we naturally seek instant explanations for the difficulties in our own lives.

We must seek the strength of faith to keep those things in our hearts, mindful that, through time and reflection, they will eventually make sense.

Paul Nizinskyj is a local government officer and freelance journalist.

Loving Lord, sometimes I don't want to wait for bad to become good and for good to become better. Is that why patience is a virtue? What if I'm impatiently waiting to become patient? Lord, good things are worth the wait. Help me to wait patiently. Amen.

Cana continues

by Sr Thérèse Garman
SMP

Mary speaks a truth about our lives; those times when the wine runs out, the glass is drained and life seems empty. Mary's words prompt serious questions. What relationships have run dry? What parts of us remain empty?

We come to the wedding at Cana not as spectators, but as participants. Despite our good intentions, the wine of our life is always running out. We become increasingly aware that we cannot replenish the wine from our

own resources. "They have no wine", Mary tells Jesus; without condemning or judging, just an observation.

This is all about you and me. Too often we live with the illusion of our own self-sufficiency. This illusion is dissipated the day the wine runs out and the jars of our life stand empty. We are faced with the fact that we are the receivers and not the creators of our life. Jesus doesn't simply refill our glasses, he transforms our lives. That's the miracle at Cana which continues to happen.

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“**We are all beggars before the love of God, a love that gives meaning to our existence and that offers us eternal life.**

Pope Francis

Today:
Isaiah 62:1-5
1 Corinthians 12:4-11
John 2:1-11

Monday:
Hebrews 5:1-10
Mark 2:18-22

Tuesday:
Hebrews 6:10-20
Mark 2:23-28

Wednesday:
Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17
Mark 3:1-6

Thursday:
Hebrews 7:25 - 8:6
Mark 3:7-12

Friday:
Acts 22:3-16 or 9:1-22
Mark 16:15-18

Saturday:
2 Timothy 1:1-8
or Titus 1:1-5
Luke 10:1-9

Next Sunday:
Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10
1 Corinthians 12:12-30
Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21