

Gospel

John 2: 1–11

This was the first of the signs given by Jesus — at Cana in Galilee.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

1 There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee.
The mother of Jesus was there,
2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited.
3 When they ran out of wine,
since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished,
the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’

4 Jesus said, ‘Woman why turn to me?
My hour has not come yet.’
5 His mother said to the servants,
‘Do whatever he tells you.’

6 There were six stone water jars standing there,
meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews:
each could hold twenty or thirty gallons.
7 Jesus said to the servants, ‘Fill the jars with water,’
and they filled them to the brim.
8 ‘Draw some out now’ he told them, ‘and take it to the steward.’
9 They did this; the steward tasted the water,
and it had turned into wine.
Having no idea where it came from
— only the servants who had drawn the water knew —
the steward called the bridegroom
10 and said, ‘People generally serve the best wine first,
and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink,
but you have kept the best wine till now.’

11 This was the first of the signs given by Jesus:
it was given at Cana in Galilee.
He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Looking at the Text

M G-7 John 2:1-11

This was the first of the signs given by Jesus — at Cana in Galilee.

The Gospel of St John

Central to the gospel of St John are a number of themes. Scholars divide the gospel into two 'books' — the first being 'the book of signs' all about Jesus' public ministry, i.e. the miracles or 'signs' he did, pointing not to himself but to God the Father, and the second, known as 'the book of Glory', showing us Jesus and his relationship with his disciples, from the Last Supper, through to his arrest, suffering, death and resurrection. It is in John's gospel that we find the emphasis on love and loving service, in Jesus' sayings, 'signs' and teaching: 'I give you a new commandment: that you love one another just as I have loved you.'

In this passage

Early on in the gospel of John, we have the first of Jesus's signs, which takes place at a wedding at Cana in Galilee. It is a well-known story, used at weddings over many centuries. It is multi-layered, and not to be taken at face value or you will miss something of its treasure. The story offers a promise that God will be with you in your marriage, and will take your love for one another and transform it into an even more powerful love that radiates out from you to others around you, in your families and communities.

Reflecting on Scripture together

Use the 'Reflecting on Scripture together — a simple way' in the introduction 'Choosing your Wedding readings'.

Further Reflection

Following the 'slow reading' process, here are some questions for further reflection:

- You might try imagining the scene, who is there, what's the weather like, the food, the table plan, the conversation — perhaps even being in it yourselves as the bride and bridegroom. What is going on? What would it be like to 'run out of wine' at your wedding? What might it feel like to have some new, excellent wine miraculously appear? Why do you think Jesus did it?
- Perhaps to go a little deeper, what might the 'wine' represent in our lives? And what does Jesus do to replenish that 'wine'? Perhaps it could be that Jesus takes the 'water' that is our ordinary selves in our relationship, and somehow without our knowing how, changes our life together in marriage into something very rich, tasty, abundant and life-giving, helping us to come out of ourselves and our selfish ways, and to really enjoy life to the full in a positive and hopeful way. What are your own hopes for your married life together? What will be the 'good wine' in your marriage?
 - Ask yourselves first, and then share together: how does my partner change my water into wine? In what ways has your love for your partner and their love for you changed you?
- What do you particularly like about this reading? Why might you choose it for your wedding?

Note about the Reading

M = this indicates that this is a reading which speaks explicitly about Marriage. One of the chosen readings must be taken from those which are about Marriage.

These notes have been prepared by Caroline Dollard, Marriage & Family Life Project, CBCEW www.catholicfamily.org.uk This is one of a series of Liturgy Office resources to support the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Marriage © 2016 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales