



**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

***The Second Sunday of Epiphany***

**Gospel Reading**

**John 2.1-11**

**The Wedding at Cana**

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' <sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' <sup>6</sup> Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' <sup>11</sup> Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

**Other Readings: Isaiah 62.1-5      Psalm 36.5-10      1 Corinthians 12.1-11**

**Homily based on the Epistle reading 1 Corinthians 12.1-11 for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.**

I would like you to think for a short moment about what you are good at. Now, please think about someone else you know well, what are they good at?

I wonder which you found easiest to answer. Many of us are not always very good at naming our own skills. We find it easier to list what someone else is good at, and value these over our own skills. Sometimes we even prefer to focus on what we're *not* so good at, and where we're lacking. We find ourselves wishing we were better at something else, instead of being thankful for what we *are* good at. At times we do not even notice what we are gifted at, because we take it for granted.

Yet we do *all* have gifts, talents and skills. These vary from person to person, so you might be good at listening and someone else might be gifted at public speaking, or you might be skilled in organising, or teaching, or hospitality, or maybe you're good at driving, or cleaning, or accounting, or business, or perhaps it's crafts you're good at, or looking after children, or music, or gardening, or praying, or making people smile, the list could go on and on. We are *all* good at something, and most of us are gifted at several things.

The passage from 1 Corinthians 12 today, reminds us God has given us our gifts, and that *all* are equally important. This is so worth remembering in a society where we tend to value certain roles or gifts over others. Yet really, none are higher than others. They are *all* given by God and should *all* be as equally valued.

And we *need* different gifts. We *need* difference. We *need* one another in our society today. If we were all the same, nothing would be achieved. We need people with different skills and roles, so we should recognise this as positive - Positive to be different and have different gifts to those around us. Even though we might struggle sometimes with those different to us, or with those who do not do things as we would, we know really, nothing would get done if we were all the same.

So difference *is* positive *and* God-given. None of our God given gifts are above others, and we should give thanks for, and celebrate, that. The Corinthians passage labels them 'spiritual gifts' and reminds us there are different ways of serving God and helping one another with these, our gifts and skills. So our talents *can* be used in different ways, *but* we all have the same purpose: of helping another and serving God, for 'the common good'.

This is so important today, as we celebrate the week of prayer for Christian unity. It is perhaps, sadly, too easy to look at different Christians groups or congregations, and to see what we feel they are doing wrong. In doing this though, are we helping one another and serving God, for the common good? *Or*, are we just showing those outside the Christian community that we do not agree, we cannot work together, and we *only* want to share God with those like us? What a sad waste if this is the only message we get out to others outside of church communities this year. Would it not be far better to show the strength in diversity, to show God loves and values difference, to show others that God loves them, as the unique individuals they are and were made to be. We *do* all have the same purpose after all, to love God and one another, and to share that with those around us. Yes, this will involve patience with one another, speaking and acting kindly, listening, and doing so with love, for the common good.

We can though, *all* use our difference and skills in varied ways to build up one another and the kingdom of God. So, however we do use our skills, we are reminded today they are *all* valued and gifts from God, which God gives us to complement one another. There *is* space in God's kingdom for us all and our varied gifts. It is the Spirit who distributes these gifts, as important, useful and necessary, for the working of the whole Christian body.

Amen

## Conversation Questions

1. *What gifts do you have from God?*
2. *How could you use these gifts for the common good?*
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you?  
What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

## Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

## Collect of the day

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

*(or)*

*Eternal Lord,  
our beginning and our end:  
bring us with the whole creation  
to your glory, hidden through past ages  
and made known  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, material from which is incorporated in this service paper, is copyright © The Archbishops' Council, 2000. Scripture passage from the New Revised Standard Version (Anglicised) copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.