



# Believe!

*John 2:1-11*

*On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."*

*His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."*

*What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.*

## *January 17, 2016* **Thought for the Week**

*Scriptures • Isaiah 62: 1-5 • Corinthians 2: 4-11 • John 2: 1-11*

As I glanced at the scriptures for this Sunday, it occurred to me that we now have the family celebrations of Christmas and the beginning of the New Year behind us and are prepared (we hope) for some serious thought about the coming of Easter Season. It is safe to say that many people celebrated those events with a glass (or two) of good wine. That celebratory beverage, of course, has a rich history that can be traced far back into oriental times. Whoever first planted "the vine of plenty" must have known that wine had meaning and importance well beyond their need to satisfy the desire for relaxation.

Setting aside, for a moment the story of the famous Wedding Feast at Cana in Galilee where Jesus did his part to assist in the celebration, let's give brief thought to wine as a sign, a metaphor, sacred and secular. First of all, from what I have heard, it is safe to say that wine is not a beverage someone consumes alone or in loneliness.

Wine is usually enjoyed as a sign of companionship, friendship and solidarity. Many tip the glasses toward an event or a person whom they honor. Memories are brought forth, well wishes are offered and hopes are expressed. I would venture to say that some of people's fondest memories come spilling out when they share a glass of *Chardonnay* with friends. In short, wine is often shared as a bonding element in our relationships with others.

It is not without reason therefore that at the beginning of the New Year we should be treated to a story, the story of a wedding feast, where a considerable amount of wine was consumed. Interestingly, the blessing of the rabbi was now over and the more festive part of the event was about to begin. Research on Jewish family festivals indicates that these often lasted for several days. In my own memory I have attended Polish weddings that lasted well into Sunday morning! (Long after I went home)

That may well be the reason why Jesus provided such an abundance of wine. Scripture scholars, however,

have consistently insisted that the abundance of wine on this occasion was meant to be understood as a sign of God's great abundance. Not only that, but the wedding itself and the celebration are meant to acclaim God's divine joy in human cultural activities. In some sense, one could say that God joins our human activities and gives them special sacred meaning, at least if we have eyes and ears to discern the significance.

This is a well-known principle in Christian sacramental theology: to discover the divine meaning in anything always begin with the natural, the human the historical, even the obvious.

So it was then with the famous wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, undeniably with any kind of human celebration, God's presence is discovered in the clinking of glasses and the breaking of bread.

My final word, therefore, must be, never pass up an opportunity to celebrate something human; there is always a sacred element somewhere in it that makes the whole event worthwhile.

## **Prayer Thought – Greece**

Creator God, we offer our thanks and praise for your love of this complex and troubled, yet awesomely diverse and beautiful world. We give thanks for your love, which is inclusive and offered unreservedly to all your beloved children.

Forgive us when we build limits to your love as we exploit our differences, cling to our prejudices and bask in self-righteousness rather than celebrating diversity and growing in shared and sacred community.

We pray for the nation and people of Greece this day. Move in the hearts of their leaders that they may consider the welfare of all people and do that which is good for all.

We long for your peace that will be realized when all life has been made whole, when humankind cares about a just and equitable distribution of earth's resources, and when each one is touched by your love and moved beyond self to service.

We ask this for the sake of the world you so loved that through your vision of shalom all the world might be saved. Amen.

## **Stewardship Thought**

*"To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit."  
(1 Corinthians 12:7)*

Paul tells us that God has blessed each of us for a reason.  
How has God blessed you?

Are you using your gifts according to God's plan; helping to do His work here on earth?  
Remember that if you don't do the work God planned for you, no one else can do it.