

2nd Sunday (C)

- Can I make a confession? I have a fear of wine running out.
- Not the wine in the house – I am very grateful for the many who gave me bottles of wine for Christmas that should see me through for awhile.
- But as I was reflecting on the Gospel I thought about the difference of the excitement elicited in the drinking of wine, compared to the mundane drinking of water, even though water is essential for life.
- Someone recently wrote a doctoral thesis on 'boredom' - & his findings are that it is good to get bored – very creative endeavours can flow out of boredom - this tends to go against a great fear we can have of boredom – especially among those who are younger – because the thinking is that we have to fill our lives & minds, & we can develop a fear of a lack of excitement.
- With the school holidays, many parents were probably frantically trying to find new ways to fend off boredom for their kids & thinking of new & exciting activities to do is always going to be a good thing...
- Organised activities involving sports, music or education have proven to be beneficial to a child's physical, cognitive, cultural & social development.
- But there is also something to be said for allowing a child to be left to their own devices, or to experience 'boredom'.
- The study claims that '*Children need time to themselves – to switch off from the bombardment of the outside world, to daydream, to pursue their own thoughts & occupations, & discover personal interests & gifts. Just letting the mind wander from time to time is important... for everybody's mental wellbeing & functioning.*'
- Back to my confession: I have a tendency of throwing myself into things when asked to do so especially by the archbishop & I drink of the new wine with great enthusiasm, but as time goes on & the wine begins to run out, & I have to drink the water of the mundane & the ordinariness of a particular job or responsibility, it's only my promise & commitment that provides the impetus for continuing – that is, until there is the miracle of new wine.
- I suspect this happens to all of us to varying degrees in whatever commitments we make to a task or people & especially in marriage.
- What happened at Cana happens sooner or later in every marriage - the wine runs out. What do I mean?
- The typical marriage starts off with a feast of joy & enthusiasm.
- The couple is surrounded by friends & well-wishers who shower them with gifts – the couple is full of hopes & dreams; they set off on their honeymoon.
- The wine is flowing freely - they come back from the honeymoon & the real business begins of setting up a home & learning to live with one another.
- At first they find great joy in each other's company.
- They are convinced that their love was preordained in heaven & meant to last for eternity - the wine is still flowing.

- But when human beings are very close to one another, problems inevitably occur; tensions arise; they discover that they did not marry an angel after all, but a human being wounded by ugly things of the past that have also shaped them; they bring this baggage with them.
- They are surprised at the poverty & woundedness they discover in one another. The honeymoon is over; the wine begins to run out.
- All that is left is the 'water' of their own limited resources at being able to cope & deal with things.
- Much the same thing happens in careers', professions, & in vocations such as the priesthood & religious life; the wine runs out there too.
- The first joy, enthusiasm & idealism ebb, & all that remains is the 'water' of routine, dullness, & possible disillusionment.
- Now that the first wine has run out, what are they to do?
- Some are tempted to run out with the wine: *'There's nothing in it for me any longer.'* While this attitude sounds reasonable, it can be a bit selfish & can retard any possibility of growth or development.
- So it can happen that when they have taken from each other, or from what they had originally committed themselves to, they begin to look elsewhere for more fruit that can be picked & eaten without pain or effort.
- So what can they do? They can acknowledge that the first wine has run out & for awhile they will have to make do with water.
- But it's not a time for panic or despair when it happens; it's time to hold on.
- There is a need to resist the temptation to abandon what we have committed ourselves to & not lose ourselves in something by which we escape.
- With regard to marriage or a vocation to priesthood, in my case we need to work on our relationships through which we can grow as human beings & discover the real meaning of love, BUT the crisis can become an opportunity.
- And here is a surprising thing: it is necessary that the first wine should run out; otherwise the new wine can't come in.
- First love, however romantically beautiful it is, cannot last.
- It is bound to wear out, but this is not a bad thing.
- In fact, it has to wear out if a new & deeper love is to be born.
- The new love consists in putting the other person before oneself.
- One has to forget oneself & find joy in loving rather than in being loved, in giving rather than in receiving. Love is a difficult adventure.
- To enter marriage or a life commitment is to enter a school of love, a school in which all are slow learners. That is why we need the presence of Christ.
- The new wine is meant not just for married couples but for everyone.
- The new wine cannot be put into old wineskins, which means we have to change. Christ has to touch our hearts & help us to love unselfishly.
- For those who seek his help, the miracle of Cana still happens - the water of selfishness is changed into the wine of true love.
- And wonderful as the old wine was, the new wine is still better.

- At the risk of mixing metaphors, if Jesus is the provider of beautiful new wine, the Father, the creating God is an artist, & we are God's unfinished works of art.
- God does the first drafts, the sketches, & never the completed works.
- It is so we can pick up what God has started, & be creators ourselves, creators of ourselves.
- We are meant to recognize the unfinished areas in ourselves & our lives & see the blanks & gaps we are meant to complete.
- God gave us freedom to become creative like our creator; to become co-creators & finish the work of art God wanted us to be from the very beginning.