

Wedding feast of Cana 2025

Jesus turns the water into wine

Water beautiful as it is

Essential as it is

Here a symbol not of life

But of normality

Of tedium

The wedding an occasion of celebration

An opportunity to step out of the day to day and have a carnival

This it seems cannot be done with water

The access and consumption of the water of life is wonderful

However occasionally there is a place for festival

So Jesus turns the water into wine

You too occasionally must turn the water into wine

Not living constantly in the exhaustion of excess

But sometimes never the less taking on the capacity for carnival

Children are very good at this

On one occasion I was with a group of youth

In the middle of the Lake District or somewhere

In a youth hostel with no computer access

No television

Little other than a Dormitory for the boys and the girls

A dining hall, an office

The children stepped out of the day to day

And had a carnival

The bunk beds became castles, meeting rooms, rehearsal halls.

The corridors secret passage ways

The outside trees a jungle

The inside a sanctuary

The ordinary

The water of life

Was transformed by imagination into the wine of fantasy and adventure

Fit for the festival

You too must occasionally turn the water into wine

Not living constantly in the exhaustion of excess

But sometimes never the less taking on the capacity for carnival

Upon reflection I think my parents were short of money come Sunday night

There were, in my home, many meals

And quite a few mouths to feed

So by Sunday tea time the cupboards were quite bare

The water of life was there

There was enough but nothing that could constitute a feast

However the love of the family

The concern of my mother

And the sibling rivalry transformed the water into wine

Or more practically the toast into a banquet of fun

You see the quicker you ate

The more you got

My elder brother John was particularly adept at stuffing his face while appearing to maintain the manners insisted upon at the table

We obviously had many other meals with spuds and stew and trifle

But the memory of the toast on Sunday night is special

Because it was then that the water of the mundane was transferred into wine

You too occasionally must turn the water into wine
Not living constantly in the exhaustion of excess
But sometimes never the less taking on the capacity for carnival

Energy levels are a concern for people of a certain age and above
Too easy to sink into an armchair and watch rubbish on a TV screen
Too easy to eat a readymade snack, and not prepare a meal
Too easy to groan, and moan, and neglect whatever capacity I have
Even lacking that water of life
Yet here still I am occasionally called to transform what I have into wine

I knew a man housebound who always had an accumulator bet on the racing on TV. He never actually won. But he could tell you what he would have won if the 2.15 came in at York.

I knew a woman housebound who discovered the delights of an air fryer. The reinvention of chips

I know so many people here in Darwen who have reason to moan, who have pains that automatically create groans, but still have the courage to smile. Still have the capacity for kindness. Still would give more to their grown up children than they are prepared to spend upon themselves.

Those for whom the water of life is running out
But who still occasionally transform it into wine

You too occasionally must turn the water into wine
Not living constantly in the exhaustion of excess
But sometimes never the less taking on the capacity for carnival

Jesus turns the water into wine
Water beautiful as it is
Essential as it is
You are not asked to live in excess
But to take the water of your life
And to transform the ordinary
With the miracles of love.
With the miracles of love and faith.