



Introduction

The Sundays after Epiphany continue to celebrate the revelation of God's glory to us as it was made known to the magi and to those on Jordan's banks at Jesus' baptism—today using wedding imagery. Our God rejoices over God's people as those being married rejoice over one another. By the power of the Spirit there are gifts galore for everyone. In Christ Jesus the best wine is saved for last. Taste and see.

Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people,
turning us from our sin to live for you alone.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin,
receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness
of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,

by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,

so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways,

to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin,
and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved.

In the name of ✙ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit,
that Christ may live in our hearts through faith. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn ELW # 470 / WOV # 703

Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, source of every blessing, you showed forth your glory and led many to faith by the works of your Son, who brought gladness and salvation to his people. Transform us by the Spirit of his love, that we may find our life together in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5

The people's return to Judah after the exile was marred by economic and political troubles. Nevertheless, the prophet declares, Jerusalem and Judah will be restored. God will rejoice over Jerusalem as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride, and the people are called to the celebration.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Psalm: Psalm 36:5-10

- ⁵Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens,
and your faithfulness to the clouds.
- ⁶**Your righteousness is like the strong mountains,
your justice like the great deep;
you save humankind and animals, O LORD.**
- ⁷How priceless is your love, O God!
All people take refuge under the shadow of your wings.
- ⁸**They feast upon the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from the river of your delights.**
- ⁹For with you is the well of life,
and in your light we see light.
- ¹⁰**Continue your lovingkindness to those who know you,
and your favor to those who are true of heart.**

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

The congregation at Corinth experienced division as people were comparing their spiritual gifts, thinking some to be superior to others. Paul invites this fractured community to trust that God's Holy Spirit has gifted them all perfectly for their mission together.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Gospel: John 2:1-11

Turning water to wine at the wedding at Cana is described as the first of Jesus' signs. Through many such epiphanies, Jesus reveals that he bears God's creative power and joyful presence into the world.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

The wedding at Cana is an interesting story in the life of Jesus. No one is healed. There are no scribes to witness what he does. No one plots his death for doing this sign. And yet, the writer of John's Gospel chooses to share this story as the first sign of Jesus public ministry.

This sign only appears in the Gospel of John – nowhere else. In the other gospels, the first miracle of Jesus is a healing. We do not even get a story close to this one in any other gospel, and that in itself begs the question – why does this story matter?

The Gospel of John is different from the other Gospels. Its main purpose is not to document the ministry of Jesus. It is written, as the author tells us, “so that you might believe.” Historical facts are not as important as showing that Jesus is the Word – the Son of God – the Light of the World as we are told in the first Chapter of John. The revealing of Jesus is the headline of the Gospel of John.

Here are a few interesting things about this story. First – note the exchange between Jesus and Mary – who by the way, is never named in John. Mary tells Jesus that they are out of wine. Jesus asks why this should concern him. Mary never tries to convince him but simply tells the servants to “do whatever he says.” She has no doubt of his ability to fix the problem, and really never doubts that he will. As we hear Jesus say later, keeping the commandments is important, and so he honors his mother by obeying.

Another fact is that we might wonder why it is such a big deal that they ran out of wine. Weddings usually lasted several days, and this is only the third day. The wedding party was a social event for the entire community, and both the host and the community provided the food and drink. To run out so soon made the host look bad, and made the community feel guilty. This lack of providing enough wine most likely would have followed the newlyweds for many years, marking the marriage with failure from the start.

As Jesus shows many times throughout his ministry, he is not bound by a set of rules, but by his own compassion. His compassion and his honor for his mother compels him to fix the problem. Notice that Jesus does not call attention to what he does – he simply tells the servants to gather water, and then to take a sample to the steward. No one except the few disciples with Jesus and the servants know what happened and who was responsible. His very first sign goes largely unnoticed except by some fishermen and the servants who carried the water.

What about the wine? Jesus not only turns the water into wine, but he creates an abundance of wine – more than will probably be needed – showing once again that our fear of scarcity is unfounded. What is needed will be provided. And the quality! Jesus could have simply created a modest wine, but instead he creates wine so superior to that which has previously been served so as to make the steward remark on it. This then becomes a foretaste of the feast to come – an abundance of extremely fine wine.

The fact that the jars used to gather the water are normally used for the Jewish rites of purification is not mere coincidence. At the last supper, Jesus says that the wine which we drink is for the forgiveness of sin. God is doing a new thing here! Instead of complicated purification rites, we simply come to the table where we are fed and forgiven.

All of this is to say that as Jesus shows compassion on the wedding party and saves them from major social embarrassment, Jesus also gives a sign of grace. No one did anything to deserve what Jesus did. It would have made no difference to Jesus if nothing had been done, and it most likely would not have made any difference to the rest of his ministry, but in his compassion, he bestows grace. Undeserved, not asked for by those who received it, but grace was given to all.

This is what grace looks like. Free and undeserved, coming at surprising times from surprising places. This is the grace we are given, and that we are called to share with others. Amen.

Hymn of the Day ELW # 310/LBW # 90 *Songs of Thankfulness and Praise*

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Apostles' Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

A brief silence.

By your Spirit, activate within your church gifts of faith, healing, and prophecy. Unite those who profess your name across congregations, denominations, and geographic boundaries. Open our hearts to recognize and celebrate surprising miracles.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your creation reflects your generosity. Bless farmers, migrant farmworkers, orchard-keepers, ranchers, and all who tend the abundance of the land. Protect food and water sources from destruction, that all can eat and drink and be satisfied.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

By your Spirit, grant wisdom, knowledge, and discernment to those who hold leadership positions at any level. Direct policymakers toward compassionate decisions that build up safe and just communities. Lead all authorities in seeking and serving the common good.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As Jesus provided generously in a moment of need, provide generous gifts of healing for those in need this day especially those we name now. Provide abundantly for all who are hungry or thirsty, all seeking shelter, and all who seek peace.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You see us for who we are and you delight in us. Embrace those struggling with self-worth, wrestling with self-identity, or facing significant life transition. Remind us that nothing can separate us from your love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You bless us through the spiritual gifts of the saints who have gone before us. We give thanks for the life of Martin Luther King Jr. and all who have modeled the way of courageous faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn ELW # 487/WOV # 701

What Feast of Love

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Worship adapted from sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2022 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS027356.

Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ray Sipe