

Sermon 2025.01.19: Second Sunday after Epiphany

During the week I happened to walk past the little café outside Safeways near Newmarket station, and overheard a bit of conversation that surprised me – but maybe shouldn't have. Two old blokes were at a table in the café, and I heard one say to the other: 'Tell me brother, what are you grateful for today?' The other, with an excited look, replied: 'Well, bless the Lord, I'm really grateful' After that I didn't hear any more – I was walking past, and not wanting to eavesdrop on any more of this conversation than I'd heard already.

But what I'd heard made me ask myself: How often do I, or we, ask someone this question; how often does someone ask us, and what would we reply if asked? How often do we ask ourselves this question?

What are we grateful for, today. Since you or I got up this morning – what's happened that makes us feel we're blessed by God; looked after by someone we love; greeted with a smile by someone we pass on the street?

Read out Stan Grant, *Murriyang: Song of Time* (Sydney: Bundyi, 2024), 237-238.

In today's gospel we hear about the wedding at Cana – first of the signs Jesus performs, according to John's gospel. When you think about it, it seems like a very

trivial, even self-indulgent thing: Jesus makes sure there's enough grog for the party to keep going. And he uses all the water available to turn to grog. It's hardly responsible service of alcohol, and it seems a very strange way to introduce the messianic arrival of Jesus into his life of ministry. A very strange way to signify – especially as the very first sign – who Christ is; what this kingdom of God is like. So what's going on here?

Several things:

First, Jesus is fully involved: this is where he belongs, this is where he is from. His mother is there, and presumably his friends.

Second, he takes responsibility, and he does it without even appearing to do anything. There's no abracadabra about it: he just tells the steward what to do, and the change has already taken place. There's no drawing attention to this - sign. No one need be embarrassed that the hospitality of the wedding has underestimated the requirements of the day. No one seems to notice, except the steward.

Third, there is an abundance, and one that exceeds expectations – and this is the first sign of the kingdom of God. And maybe that's the point – the reign of God is abundant. That's the first thing to be said – it's generous, even in the smallest, most apparently insignificant, even trivial of matters. That's why I decided to read you the passage from Stan Grant – he manages to sum up this idea, that God is present in the smallest, most immediate, moments.

