

**Daily Office Devotional, Thursday, January 7, 2021**  
**The week of the Epiphany**  
**The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.**

Daily Office Lectionary Readings

AM Psalm 103; PM Psalm 114, 115  
Isa. 52:3-6, Rev. 2:1-7, John 2:1-11

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, Book of Common Prayer  
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, Book of Common Prayer  
Compline (Night Prayer), Page 127, Book of Common Prayer

Daily Office Gospel, John 2:1-11

2:1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' 4 And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' 5 His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' 6 Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. 9 When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' 11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

David's Reflections

John's Gospel makes music with symbols. Here, we get introduced to one of the Gospel writer's most pervasive symbol systems, water. Today's reading narrates Jesus' attendance at a wedding at which the host has underestimated the amount of wine it would take to entertain the guests. Jesus directed the servants to fill six stone water pots to the brim and to draw out water to take to the chief steward of the wedding. That water was transformed to wine. The relevance of this story for the Epiphany season can be found in the last verse, "Jesus . . . revealed his glory."

The water pots were used for water to purify utensils and food and for the ritual washing of the hands. There were six of them, in the Jewish poetry of numbers, one short of seven, the number for perfection. In short, this symbol system speaks of purifying and cleansing.. The rituals common to the religion of Jesus' contemporaries could speak of but not effect that cleansing. Only the Lamb of God can take away the sin of the world.

Later in chapter two, Jesus cleansed the Temple and presented himself as the new Temple. In John 3, he confronted Nicodemus, the Pharisee, the best that this ritual piety of cleansing could produce. Nicodemus heard Jesus say that unless he was begotten of water and the Spirit he could not inherit the Kingdom of God. The water in those old six water pots could not effect the cleansing and forgiveness Nicodemus needed; only the Lamb of God could transform that water to wine and could cleanse Nicodemus.

No matter what stains might have soaked into the fabric of one's soul, Jesus can cleanse. Guilt cannot resist the new wine of his presence and saving love. Shame and feelings of personal inadequacy and unworthiness cannot survive the Lamb's touch. What would Jesus do with those smoldering feelings of regret and emptiness? He would remove them. And, he would change our relationship to the wounded memories that plague us, so that they no longer evoke that same pain. His coming into our lives can enliven a wearied hope for renewal and transformation, can enable our faith in his saving love to deliver us.

St. John of the Cross closed his poetic hymn, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, with these words:

All things I then forgot,  
My cheek on Him who for my coming came;  
All ceased and I was not,  
Leaving my cares and shame  
Among the lilies, and forgetting them.

*Collect of the Second Sunday after Christmas Day*

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

*Amen.*

*Collect of the Feast of the Epiphany*

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the Peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

*A Collect for the Renewal of Life*

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*In the Morning*

This is another day, O Lord. I know not what it will bring forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be. If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently. And if I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly. Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of Jesus. Amen.

*A Collect for the Presence of Christ*

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

*A Collect for Mission*

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*