**The Revd Dr Ian McIntosh, Director of Mission and Ministry, reflects on John 2.1-11 for the Second Sunday of Epiphany, 19th January.**

Just before Christmas, we went to see a show at the theatre. Our seats were at one side of the stage. You could see all the action on the stage, but you could also see where the actors enter and exit. And you got a glimpse of the people who are behind the scenes. These are the essential and vital people who help change the scenery, and the props, who help actors change costumes or prompt them if lines are forgotten. Although the spotlight is rightly on the performers, it's often the case that, as they receive their applause at the end of the show, they turn to recognise all those whose hard work behind the scenes has enabled the story to be told.

In so many of the gospel stories, not only are there people in the spotlight, but there are also people behind the scenes, those who Jesus draws attention to and values. In today's gospel reading, the wedding at Cana, we see a powerful example of this in the way that both Jesus and Mary turn the spotlight onto the role of the behind-the-scenes servants. Yes, of course, this is a famous story about abundance, of water turned into wine, but it's also a story of how God has always involved those who think themselves insignificant in playing a very significant part in being witnesses to the life-transforming love of Christ.

You might expect the focus of a wedding story to be on the bride and groom, but no, the focus here is on the way in which Mary prepares the servants to encounter Jesus. “Do whatever he tells you,” she says. And then Jesus invites the servants to do what they had expected to do, to fill up the jars of water and to take some to the chief steward.

It's only when the steward has tasted the wine that the transformation from the water is discovered. And what I love about John's Gospel are the asides. The steward did not know, John says, where the wine would come from, but the servants who had drawn the water knew. They were playing a vital, if behind the scenes, role in the transforming work of Christ, and they were invited to participate in it by Jesus, and to be witnesses to what had taken place.

Now, the gospels leave it to our imagination to wonder what kind of stories the servants would have told their families when they got home that night. “You’d never believe what I just saw!” might have been one phrase used, and this continues to be the way in which God engages with God's world, involving, enabling, and encouraging ordinary, behind-the-scenes people to be part of God's story of transforming love.

Yes, it really is helpful that we follow a God who believes in transformation and abundance, but it is even more incredible that God takes you and me to be witnesses and participants in those stories and acts of transformation. God uses us, insignificant as we may feel to be, and enables transformation to result. This may be through small acts of kindness in response to need; the phone call to someone we haven't been in touch with for a while, the volunteering to step into a new role. These do not need to be in the limelight, but they're all part of the way in which Christ is made known and the world recreated to be the place which God intends it to be.

So, the wedding at Cana points to this new, transformed creation. The real spotlight is on the ordinary people caught up in God's plans, who discover that being a disciple can be a transformative adventure.

Let us pray. Gracious God, who is made known at this Epiphany time, thank you for your transforming work. But thank you more importantly, for the ways in which you take ordinary people to play a part in your transforming purposes in the world. Give us hearts and minds to receive you, and hands and feet to follow you on this adventure, as together we are invited to remake your broken world.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen.