

MOTHERING SUNDAY

Mothering Sunday at St Mary's Island church was based on the story of the wedding at Cana. The family service was full of its usual enjoyment as we enacted out the wedding. As ever, through the laughter and activity, came a serious side to what the story tells us.

The story of the wedding is found in John's gospel chapter two. Jesus had gone to a wedding with his mother at the time when his ministry had not yet started just an ordinary young man out with his mum. But there was a problem - the wine had run out. It is not hard to imagine the distress this was causing. There was no ability then to get round to the nearest off license and buy some more.

Although John never mentions her, there was probably another mother present at the wedding – the mother of the bride and she would have been getting very anxious indeed. The absence of wine would amount to a social disgrace and for this to happen at her daughter's wedding was nothing more than her worst nightmare. Nevertheless she went to Jesus' mother and told her about the dilemma. Now Jesus' mother had not the resources to do anything about the problem but she did know that Jesus could do something. So she asked her son who directed that the enormous wine jars be filled with water. Then when the servants, who knew nothing of what was going on, came to draw off the "water" they found that it was wine. But not just wine – it was the finest vintage going. The problem was solved and the wedding went on. This was, according to John, the first miracle that Jesus performed and at the time probably only Jesus and his mother were aware of what had happened.

Two thoughts come to mind on considering this story. The first is that these two mothers represent all there is about motherhood. One mother was harassed and stressed and the other was calmly seeking out solutions to problems. Isn't that what all mothers do? Don't all mothers get stressed over problems created by or around their children? But don't they, at the same time, have to come up with answers to problems? This is what motherhood is all about.

The second thought was about Jesus who is very much on the sidelines in this story. I went to Venice last year and saw a huge painting by the Venetian painter, Veronese. This massive work was about the wedding at Cana and depicted lots of people in a grand setting but it is difficult to be sure which one of the figures represented Jesus. I think that Veronese was right in his interpretation. Jesus was not centre stage at that time. He was on the sidelines.

Jesus might be on the sidelines of our life or he might be stage centre but when we face one of life's problems it makes no difference. Jesus is there for everyone as he was there for those two mums. It is open to all of us, mums and dads, to take problems to him and possibly to ask someone to help with this. At St Mary's Island church, we may not hold all the answers but we can take the problem to Jesus with you as Jesus' mum took the problem to her son at the wedding. It is maybe that problems won't be solved overnight, but with Jesus directing us, as he directed those at the wedding, then we might be confident in faith that the problem will be overcome.

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