

May these words be pleasing. Amen.

Today we have a story of a wedding. Jesus was there, his mother Mary was there, his disciples were there. I'm not imagining the Kings Head but I am imagining, maybe, a tent or series of tents; I'm imagining the whole community coming together. The bride and the groom – they have been imagining their perfect wedding, their big day; but for all their best efforts things are never perfect.

At my wedding there was a lot of nervousness before the service began. Can you imagine that bit, before the service, when the bloke is told to sit down, 'you'll be fine, it'll be alright, take a deep breath, just take a mo and relax. So, I sat the minister down, you'll be fine, it'll be alright, take a deep breath

Behind the glamour of the wedding is the commercial reality. People trying to make money, to make a living. I love the leaflets at the Kings Head which offer a wedding package priced by the year; this year it is £2022, last year £2021, and so on. I love the commercial reality of this picture from Cana, in Galilee, where Jesus, his mother, and his disciples were eating the food and enjoying the wine; but then the wine ran out

I wonder why the disciples were invited. 'Perhaps if we're inviting Jesus we better invite his mates.' I wonder how Mary broke the news about the wine running out. Was it shock, 'the wine's running out', or was it with a bit of glee, 'you never guess what, they've run out of wine!' I wonder why the wine was running out.

When I was a young choirboy weddings were useful money. 50p a time. Sometimes 3 or even 4 weddings on a Saturday, and we didn't have to sing very much. We were a cruel bunch; we used to get back to vestry after the service and predict how long the wedding would last. We normally gave at least a year but we were particularly pessimistic about the ones where the wine had clearly run out even before the service had begun.

Sometimes the best man would get in the way. My brother's best man had to be fished out of the lake. We had one groom who had 'why me' on his shoes. It's a good question. Why me. Please permit me one slice of cheesiness: in 25 years married to Gillian I often ask, why me. And she, I'm sure, often asks, why him?

When our Bishop, Helen Anne, preaches on the story of the wedding in Cana in Galilee she asks people to take a character from the story and imagine the events of the wedding through to the moment when the water is changed to wine.

The bride and groom, on their big day, all the planning and hard work, right through to the moment that they realise there's something wrong with the wine supply. What? Why now? Why us? Why me?

The steward has worked hard to earn his wages; but the wine is running out and he faces disaster. How can this be? Why is this happening to me?

The disciples. We don't even know why we're here. And what's happening about the wine?

Mary. How many times must she have asked, why me? It's odd, isn't it, that Mary says to the stewards, 'do whatever he tells you'. There's been no miracles up to that point.

Jesus. Why me. Leave me alone, I just want to enjoy the wedding. Why me. 'Woman, my hour has not yet come'; but he relents, he cannot help himself; the wedding once again has wine only this time the very finest wine; not just some wine but an abundance of wine (6 jars of dirty water).

Let the dance begin. Mary goes home, goes to bed, she's a proud Mum. The disciples, they go to bed very happy, they're backing the right guy. And Jesus, when he goes to bed, why me.

When I want to pray alone, why me. When the devil's on my back in the desert, why me. When the crowds demand a sign, why me. When I am sent to Jerusalem, why me. When I'm in the garden, why me. When I'm the cross, *why* O Lord have you forsaken *me*?

And now 'for us'. All this Jesus does for us. He loves us, he transforms us, for us, and through us. He gives abundantly to us. Why us? Why me?

Some words from Psalm 8 to finish: 'When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have ordained, what is man, that you should be mindful of him? O Lord our governor, how glorious is your name in all the world!'