

- Free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
- You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way.
- To give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Prayers

Banish, O Lord, all darkness from our hearts, through Christ, the Dayspring from on high, who fulfilled your ancient promise that we should find our freedom in your peace; for all ages belong to you, yesterday, today and for ever.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God our Father, we pray in this Epiphany season, that the people of God in all the world may worship in spirit and truth; that the Church may discover again that unity which is your gift; that the nations of the earth may seek after the ways that make for peace; that the whole creation may be set free to enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God; that those who need the healing of God in body mind and spirit may receive His touch and that all who with Christ have entered the shadow of death may find the fulfilment of life and peace.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father.....

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

THE UNITED BENEFICE OF WALMERSLEY ROAD
CHRIST CHURCH, WALMERSLEY
ST.JOHN with ST.MARK, BURY

24 January 2021:
3rd Sunday of Epiphany:
Service at Home

You may wish to light a candle and have some reflective music playing in the background.

The Lord is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes.

God is close to those who trust in him.

Nahum 1.7

Opening Prayer – Collect for the day

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

GOSPEL READING: John 2: vs 1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.

Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. 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 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." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

REFLECTION – Nigel Silvester

Weddings were major social events, and not just for the families but for the whole community, who would all be invited to the celebrations. Any shortcomings would be remembered and could be a considered a matter of shame which was to be avoided at all costs. So difficulties with the wine supply needed to be sorted. In amongst all of the 'what happened next' two particular things come to notice – the importance of Mary's role and that most of those present had no idea what had happened.

Firstly, Mary recognised the problem and took responsibility. She may not have been able to resolve the wine shortage herself, but she knew someone who could. Despite showing initial reluctance, that someone, Jesus, did get the job done. He just needed a little encouragement from his mother! It would seem that Jesus certainly took the view that 'mother knows best'!

So how are we when it comes to taking responsibility? How do we react to being encouraged to take on a task? Perhaps more importantly, how effectively do we encourage

others? If Mary hadn't acted as she did there would have been no first miracle – and no best wine!

Secondly, bearing in mind this was Jesus' first miracle, there was no fanfare, no attention seeking. Only Jesus' disciples and some servants knew what had taken place. The vast majority of those at the wedding just enjoyed the results by drinking the best wine! They were completely unaware that a miracle had taken place.

It was the first of many that Jesus performed. He continues to intervene and to perform miracles in our day. Wonderful, amazing and unexplained things happen. To most people that is put down to good fortune, luck or coincidence. Those who are aware of Jesus' presence will testify that it is down to prayer and faith - and to God's intervention. There are many instances where Jesus is intervening behind the scenes for those who don't know him. They will taste the benefits (the best wine) and not think too much about it. May be our job is to introduce them to the Miracle Maker - the one who can change things for the better. Jesus - the one who does things without a need for fuss or trumpets blowing - well, not just yet anyway!!

Benedictus (the Song of Zechariah)

- Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, for he has come to his people and set them free.
- He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of his servant David.
- Through his holy prophets God promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us.
- He promised to show mercy to our forebears and to remember his holy covenant.
- This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies.