

Many the gifts, many the works, one in the Lord of all.

The readings at mass this weekend provide us with such rich imagery that it is difficult to know how to start when applying it to our own situations. I suppose one could sum it up with the phrase “unity in diversity”. But somehow that fails to express the sheer joy and elation that comes across in the first reading from Isaiah. And nor does it really capture the awe and wonder that pervades the gospel account of the Wedding Feast at Cana. However, that list of gifts which St Paul describes in the extract from First Corinthians, certainly poses a question or two about how as individuals and as a community, we are able to recognise the abundance of riches we possess. Furthermore how are we called to apply these gifts in our lives? Perhaps if we pick out just a couple of them and examine them using Isaiah’s sense of joy and elation, and the disciples’ sense of awe and wonder, we may find ourselves becoming open to many aspects of them which we hadn’t realised was either possible or feasible!

Take the gift of healing. Almost automatically we focus on the physical. Without further thought, we dismiss our own capacity in this field as beyond us and better left to the professionals. But healing isn’t just about the physical. Many people whom we know are looking for healing of another sort. They are seeking the healing of relationships that have become ruptured and exposed, most notably our relationship with God. For many, this is a relationship which has been allowed to fall silent and has been “abandoned” and “forsaken” – phrases which resound through Isaiah’s poetic proclamation, describing how our friendship with God has lapsed. But God intends to act. No longer will this state of affairs persist. We are to be healed and brought back, together once more as “wedded” and his “delight”.

Or take the gift of prophecy. Again, something which we would ordinarily think has nothing much to do with me. But aren’t we all signs of God’s presence in the world and isn’t the expression of the prophetic, a mark of our baptismal vocation? We may not realise it, but we manifest this prophetic voice whenever we act to express God’s grace in the world. We do this through simple deeds of charity and kindness which evoke and make present the love which Jesus speaks of. “Fill the jars with water” Jesus said, and miraculously the water turned into wine. We are those jars which have been filled, not with water but with the new wine of the kingdom of God that has been made evident to the world in the person of Jesus Christ. It is our prophetic task to bring this message in all its abundance and fullness into the lives of those around us. The reality is that this abundance and fullness is expressed in the gifts which we have all been given. And the diversity of these gifts, when administered through faith in Jesus Christ is both transformative and miraculous, and they make us one.

In Jesus Christ we have received the revelation of God’s gift as the *Word made flesh*, and we saw his glory. That glory now resides in us and in our communities. We possess all the tools we need to bring about the transformation which Isaiah describes and the miraculous which Jesus makes present. We possess them in the people who day after day, week after week find themselves no longer “Forsaken” or “Abandoned” but once more “Wedded” and a “Delight” to the one who comes to offer the *new wine* freely given and poured out in all its fullness.