

## 2C

Last week we spoke about baptism of children and how important it is. The Church tells us that baptism and the Eucharist are the two pivotal sacraments but a part of me says that, from a practical point of view, a good Christian marriage is up there with the best. If the marriage is stable then there is a good chance that the children will be baptised and subsequently brought up in the Faith.

It is interesting to note from today's Gospel that Jesus performed his very first miracle at a wedding celebration. This is an indication of the high esteem with which he held it. The Catholic Church also places marriage high on its list of priorities - it is included as one of its seven sacraments. Marriage is a very significant moment in a person's life.

I often say to engaged couples that some people marry *at the church* while others marry *in the Church*. There is a world of difference between the two. '*At the church*' means that more attention is paid to the kind of building where the wedding is to take place rather than being a committed member. '*In the church,*' on the other hand, means that the couple or at least one partner, is already a member of the believing community and their marriage is an extension of their faith in Jesus whom they believe will sustain them throughout their life together.

The couple in today's gospel made sure to have Jesus and Mary among their invited guests. If Jesus and Mary have pride of place in the life of the married couple then despite their human weaknesses and failures all will turn out well as it did at Cana.

Another interesting point about today's Gospel story is that Jesus saved the day for the couple at Cana. Much to their delight he not only changed a small amount of water into any old vintage but a huge amount into the very best of wine. The conclusion we can draw from this is that if He is close to the

couple, the strains and stresses of family life won't get them down but will be opportunities for greater closeness as a couple. They will not be tempted to give up when trials come.

We hear a lot of talk today about alternatives family set-ups - those who ditch marriage in favour of co-habitation or those who enter into same gender partnerships. There is a world of difference between a partner and a spouse. If we put these alternative liaisons on a par with Christian marriage then, unlike the couple at Cana we keep Jesus at a distance. These lifestyles contravene the true nature of married love. A fundamental ingredient of married love is the life-long commitment a couple make to each other on their wedding day. Without it the relationship is built on a wobbly foundation.

*At the end of the gospel today it says that 'Jesus let his glory be seen and the disciples believed in him'. Society today, more than ever, needs couples to let the beauty of their marriage be seen so that the younger generation will be inspired to make this same life-long commitment.*