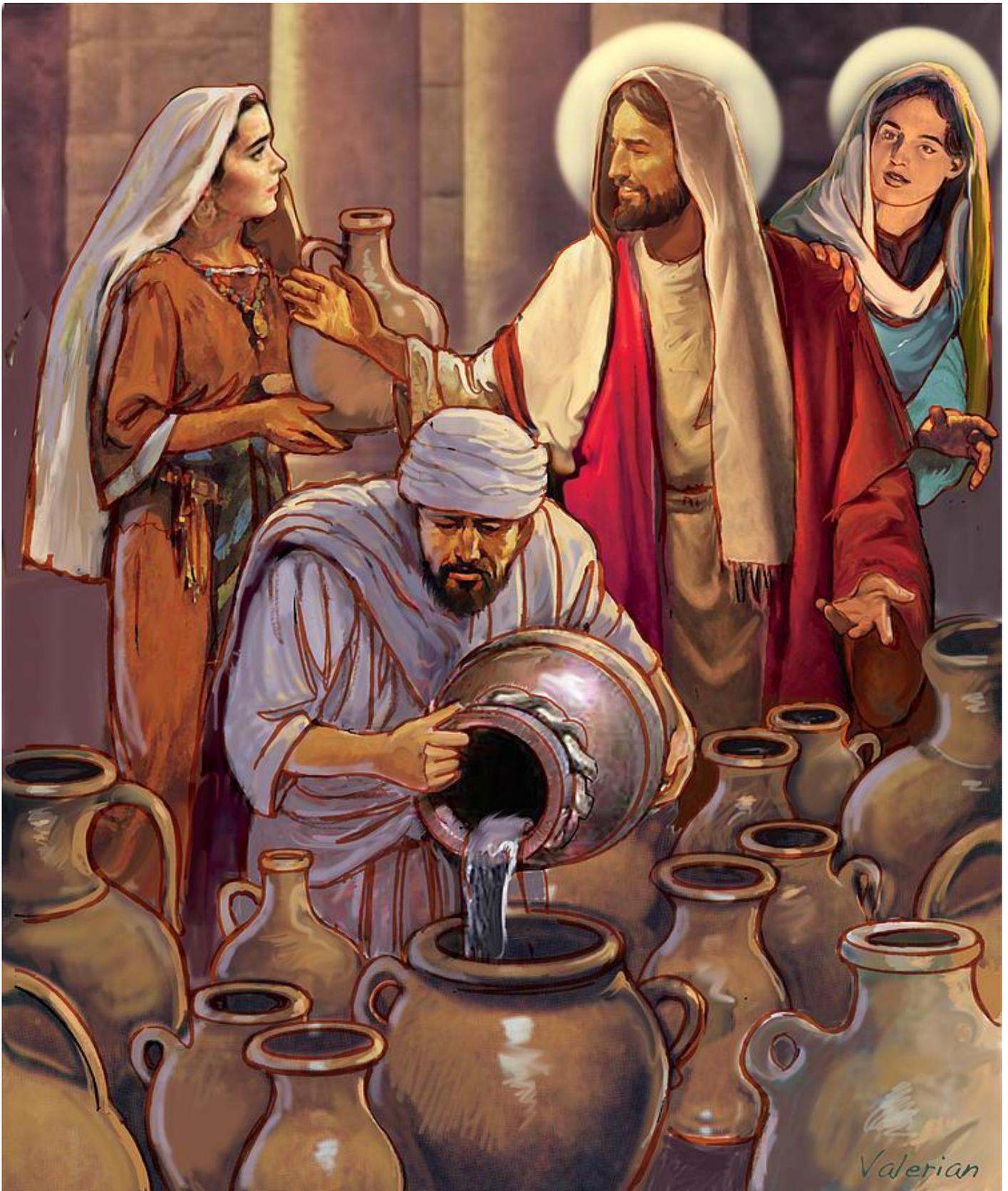


CELTIC EVENING PRAYER
IN THE SEASON OF
EPIPHANY



GLORY TO GOD

**Glory to God, Glory to God.
Glory to God creating, Glory to God redeeming,
Glory to God sustaining the world.**

In the coming of the Wise Three,
you were revealed as King.
In your entering of the baptismal waters,
you were revealed as Christ.
In your changing of water into wine,
you revealed a new creation.

**We give you thanks for signs of your Presence in the world.
We give thanks for your promise to be with us always.
We give thanks for your Presence with us, here, now.
Come, Lord Jesus.
Pour into our hearts your wine of transformation.**

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

John 2 : 1-11

On the third day, a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine'. 'Dear woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My time has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Nearby stood 6 stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from 20 to 30 gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water': so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.' They did so and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, 'Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine when the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.' This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory and his disciples put their faith in him.



REFLECTION

During the season of Epiphany, we encounter the events that begin to reveal the divine nature of Jesus of Nazareth. These include the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus and the baptism of Jesus, when the Father declared him to be his Beloved Son and the Holy Spirit descended on him. Another such event is the wedding at Cana in Galilee, where the disciples witnessed the first of Jesus' many miracles. God's glory was again revealed and the disciples' faith in Jesus takes root.

In his gospel, John refers to miracles as 'signs' – signs pointing to the true nature and identity of Jesus. John tells us that there are many of these signs – too many to be included in his gospel. The ones he does choose to include, he believed to be highly indicative of who Jesus was and what he was doing. Of course, our whole faith rests on the greatest miracle of all : the death and resurrection of Jesus and it's to the Passion of Jesus that this first miracle at Cana points : we're told that the wedding took place on the third day. It was on the third day that Jesus rose from the dead. The wine itself points to the Last Supper, when Jesus said, 'Drink this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many.' Not a select few, but many. Just as the wine flowed in abundance at the wedding feast - from Jesus' sacrifice, flows a superabundance of grace, of unlimited forgiveness and life. It's also important to remember that Jesus transformed the water into wine. He didn't throw it away and start again. Jesus didn't deny the world, but transformed it into a new creation and this is what he offers to us – transformation.

The master of the banquet was astonished that the bridegroom had saved the best wine till last. Jesus is

often referred to in the gospels as 'the bridegroom' and he certainly saves the best till last – both in the miracle of his resurrection and in the life that awaits those who believe in him : 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard and no mind has imagined the things which God has prepared for those who love him'(1 Cor 2:9)



WE BELIEVE

**We believe in the God of miracles,
Creator of nature, time and space,
who acts within and without all.**

**We believe in the extravagant God,
who turns water into the finest wine,
who turns hearts to him,
who turns lives around.**

**We believe in the God of Jesus Christ,
the source of abundance,
full of grace and truth.**

**We believe in the redeeming God,
who emptied himself on the Cross
that we might be filled with his Spirit.**

We believe in the God of New Creation.

PRAYERS FOR OUR WORLD

*God of wedding parties and new wine, of love and laughter,
we bring before you those for whom life feels devoid of joy:*

*Where the pandemic wreaks havoc and leaves suffering in its wake :
for those with the virus, for those in hospital, for those who will lose their lives.*

*For all who have lost their jobs, homes, connection with family and friends.
For all medical staff and carers, for all key workers and volunteers and everyone
we hold in our hearts today,*

Lord, we pray for the hope of Epiphany.

*For young people who are trying to continue their education from home and for
those struggling to cope. For those beset by mental ill health,*

Lord, we pray the light of Epiphany.

*For countries ruled by dictators, where people are oppressed and exploited; for
places where democracies are manipulated by the rich and powerful;
where poverty and homelessness are rife,*

Lord, we pray the justice of Epiphany.

*For places where conflict reigns and lives are ravaged by war. Where war
engenders famine and disease,*

Lord, we pray the peace of Epiphany.

For people suffering in body, mind or spirit and for those who care for them,

Lord, we pray the love of Epiphany.

*For those whose earthly journey has ended and who have passed into your eternal light and peace and for those who mourn them,
Lord, we pray the comfort of your promises.
Loving God,
may your holy angels watch over us and
may your protecting peace be upon us and those we love.
These prayers we humbly offer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING PRAYER

For those who seek a Saviour,
we lead them to the stable,
to the One who was born to bring
freedom, forgiveness, liberty.
For those who seek assurance,
we lead them to the Light,
to the One who opens eyes to understanding
God's Word, Truth.
For those who seek forgiveness,
we lead them to a Grace beyond comprehension:
to wholeness, healing, peace.
Lord, make us channels of your light, love and peace –
signs of your Presence, we pray. **Amen.**

BLESSING



May God the Father, who led the Wise Men by a star to find the Christ,
lead us on our pilgrimage to find the Lord.
May God the Son, who transformed the ordinary into the extraordinary
make of us a new creation.
May God the Holy Spirit fill us with love, light and joy
and may the Presence and blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and those we love and pray for,
today and always. **Amen.**