

Georgina Byrne *reflects on*
1 Corinthians 12:1-11 and John 2:1-11

The miracle of Cana is another instance of revelation of Christ to the world in the Epiphany season. It is a rich passage – the water turning to wine evokes the sense of abundance, celebration, and God’s generosity wherever Christ is present. But it is worth taking a moment to notice how the miracle, the transformation, happens. Significantly, and perhaps surprisingly, Jesus doesn’t do anything.

His mother is the one who alerts him to the wine shortage; it is his mother who directs the servants to do as Jesus instructs them. All that Jesus tells them is to fill the jars with water and then to take them to the steward. He does not touch the jars or pray a blessing; he does nothing. The servants do the hard work. They fill the jars with gallons of water, they take a cup to the steward and they, we imagine, pour out the wine for the guests.

Other people enable the miracle. His mother tells people to listen, and those who listen are the ones who make it happen.

Paul reminds us, in his letter to the Corinthians, how each of us has a part to play. We each have “gifts”, “services”, and “activities” to offer for the building up of the body of Christ. For Christ’s glory to be revealed today, we have to listen – and to act. ☺



Generous God, whose abundant love has power to transform the world, give us ears to hear your word, a heart that is obedient to instruction, and the courage to use our gifts and a willingness to make you known. Amen.

Ephesus

Part 3 – in the footsteps of Paul

by Sr Janet Fearn

Sr Janet continues her tour of Ephesus.

It’s quite an experience to walk through what remains of the ancient city of Ephesus. Mary, John, Paul, Barnabas, Luke, and many others, walked these streets and saw the arches, statues and columns which, though time-battered, we can still admire today. John, following his exile on the island of Patmos, lived, died and was buried in nearby Selçuk in about AD 100. Paul lived in

Ephesus from AD 52-54. It’s easy to imagine them coming together for a meal and a chat.

More early Christians were present in this now Turkish archaeological site than we can ever know. Paul, and later, Ignatius of Antioch, wrote to the Ephesians from distant Rome. Three Ecumenical Councils were held in Ephesus in AD 431, 449 and 475.

To be in the presence of so much early Christian activity, albeit separated by two millennia, is an experience both humbling and joyful. ☺

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pain.”

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), writer and theologian

People of the New Testament

Part 7 – Nicodemus (John 3:1-21; 7:32-52; 19:38-42)

by Caroline Fletcher

Caroline explains what inspired her to write about one of the characters in her new book.

It is Jesus’ attitude to keeping laws, such as what should or should not be done on the sabbath, that lies at the heart of his differences with the Pharisees. It might also explain why Nicodemus was tentative about following him.

Although the Pharisees have often been criticised for being legalistic, there were good motives behind their dedication to the Law. The Jews had

suffered greatly from conquest and oppression. In 587 BC, for example, the Babylonian army destroyed Jerusalem, razed the Temple to the ground and forced many Jews to leave their homeland to live in captivity in Babylon. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel declared it to be God’s punishment for disobedience (Jeremiah 11:9-13; Ezekiel 14:21-23). The Pharisees wanted to learn the lessons of the past to ensure that God would not punish them again, hence their desire to make Israel a holy nation by encouraging keeping God’s laws. ☺