

2 Epiphany, Celtic
Christ and Grace
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John 2:1-11
January 20, 2019

Yesterday morning I woke to the sound of birds. Not the usual assorted chirps that come with the dawn, but an intense, loud warbling with no quiet space in between. When I looked out of the window I saw that the yard was filled with robins. Hundreds, thousands of robins, singing and darting to and fro. The holly tree shook with the weight and motion of so many birds on its branches. As they flew through the air from branch to branch, I marveled and wondered how there were no collisions, without an air traffic controller. Then I remembered that they have God as their air traffic controller.

This overflowing abundance of robins in my yard happens every year around this time. I too easily forget about it until it happens again to remind me of the marvelous works of God. And every year when it happens, it wakens in me the realization that my world and my concerns are just a small part of God's greater plan. Whatever is on my mind, whatever is troubling my heart, or creating anxiety or frustration or fear.... All of that gets overwhelmed by this extravagant display of God's creation. The cacophony of birdsong and flashes of red feather create a grand party of abundance right there in the back yard, right there in the midst of my sense of scarcity.

Is it too much to believe that God created this world, created us, to live in love and joy, feasting on the abundance of God's grace?

When life distracts us from God's feast of joy and abundance, when we feel as if we are not enough, or not able to measure up, it's not all that easy to attend the party, or to look for the signs of God's presence. When we convince ourselves that we are not very good at something, when we are sure that we are losing ground, failing miserably even, we cannot hear the birdsong. Maybe we find ourselves in this emptiness personally, or as we consider the political landscape, or in our collective hopes for the well being of the city of Petersburg. The weight of so much expectation placed on us by the world, family, friends, and most heavily ourselves can keep us from remembering that Jesus comes to pull us up out of all of that, to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Jesus did this at a wedding in Cana, turning water into wine, pouring grace into empty wine glasses that were about to cause great embarrassment and humiliation to the host. Exactly when there appeared to be no grace, love showed up and soaked a wedding celebration in love.

God will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. This reality surrounds us if only we will listen, and look, and respond with songs of thankfulness and praise.

Whenever we are empty, whenever we run out – and we will run out, over and over, the power of God is made manifest, is revealed to us if we will stop our frantic darting to and fro, if we will allow our anxieties and frustrations to rest on the branches of God's strong love.

And when we do that, we will find ourselves at the extravagant feast of God's generosity and love.