

SERMON

WELLS CATHEDRAL
Eucharist 9.45 a.m. Sunday 29th January 2017

“ BE HAPPY”

The Revd. John E. Sclater Priest Vicar

In that story of the **Wedding Feast** that we have just heard read there was mentioned **six stone water jars standing there – we’ll come back to those in a moment.**

But I’ll begin with **another story**, that of a French film producer called **Arnaud Desjardins**. He became interested in filming in India and from that grew an increasing interest in the great spiritual tradition of India. So he made the decision to spend some weeks of silent Retreat in a Hindu Ashram, what we might call a community or monastery. After he arrived he went to see the Swami or Guru who was the head spiritual teacher of the ashram and he asked him if he could give him some words of advice about how to spend his time. The swami said no, he didn’t have any useful words but asked him to come again when he was due to leave. Arnaud Desjardins went to him again the day of his departure and the Swami said to him simply :

“Arnaud, be happy.”

He was so overwhelmed by the simplicity of the words, that though he was a middle-aged French intellectual, he broke down and wept.

“Arnaud, be happy”.

What is it that makes us happy ?

All of us are profoundly influenced by the world of advertising which surrounds us on every side: on the television, in magazines and in shops. And this whole world of advertising promises to make us happy. It is constructed on one very simple truth : that we all sense within us that we are not truly happy. None of us like feeling unhappy and we may not like others to know how unhappy we are, it’s embarrassing, certainly not cool. So how can we cure our unhappiness ? Well, the answer is simple : just buy this product... this new dress, this new shirt, these new shoes, this new car, this new perfume, this new kitchen, this new bathroom, this new house, this new smart phone...and you will be happy. Because we sense that we are not fully happy **we all fall for it, time and time again, over years and years of our life.** From our time at school to our time of retirement ...we have this feeling that happiness lies outside us, somewhere, around the corner and if only we could get something we would be happy.

But nothing **outside us** can **ever** make us happy: happiness is something within and that is the only place we will ever find it.

We can say to ourselves, well I had better start looking for this happiness inside me ...we search and search and discover it is not there ... so the temptation comes... let’s **get something, find something, buy something** that will make us happy. Let’s get out of

the European Union and we'll be happy, let's make America great again and we'll be happy. Politicians use the same trick as advertisers because they too have fallen for the same fundamental untruth. Sooner or later we come to see the emptiness of their promises, and so we want to get rid of them and elect some more politicians who can promise us that they can deliver the thing that is outside us, that will bring us happiness. **And so it goes on** from generation to generation, from childhood to old age.

It often feels as if we are living at a party and the wine has run out. Life doesn't feel as it should. How can we find the wine that will enliven our lives again...let's go out and find some. Some champagne maybe ? Or perhaps a nice Sancerre will do the trick ? Or a nice Burgundy or Claret ? And the more you pay, the better the wine, the happier you will be...or will you...or will you ? When the bottle is empty you have to go on searching, again and again.

What nearly **all** of us overlook, nearly **all** the time, is that standing close by us are **six stone jars containing water**. Something so ordinary we almost don't notice it, and yet there is nothing more miraculous on the face of this planet than water. We know of course that if there were no water we would not be here, there would be no life? We spend billions of dollars on sending space probes to other planets – in search of what ? Gold ? Diamonds ? No – water. We know don't we that our own bodies are made up of 70% water ? If you haven't quite yet grasped how miraculous water is then I suggest you could read the books of the renowned Japanese scientist Dr. Masaru Emoto – '**The Hidden Messages of Water**' and '**The Secret Life of Water**' are two of his books. Water doesn't always crystallise in the same way, if water is made to crystallise with the music of Mozart surrounding it then it will crystallise beautifully. If it is made to crystallise with harsh, discordant music around it will crystallise in an ugly way. Water is influenced by words. Dr Emoto says that the most beautiful crystal he has ever seen was formed when water was exposed to the words " love and gratitude." The act of speaking words has power to change the world. The entire universe is in a state of vibration so everything is creating sound: and there is a **master listener to receive the sound : the master listener is WATER**.

The words **LOVE and GRATITUDE** form the fundamental principles of the law of nature and the phenomenon of life: and you cannot go out and buy love and gratitude **anywhere. You have to find them in your own heart, inside yourself.** Gratitude means that you have to discover that life is not something you own or can you possess, or you can buy, it is a **precious gift GIVEN** to you. And love can only be kept by being given away.

"Be happy"...something as seemingly simple as water, but it is the fundamental thirst of your life, of your heart and of your soul. And you will not be truly happy until you have discovered that **love and gratitude are the fundamental laws of life** But if you do discover that truth inside yourself it will be as if you have truly discovered the wine of life that make the heart glad and happy and free.

We can't find happiness by searching somewhere else, outside ourselves : but we don't have to search somewhere else, for **standing close by each one of us are six stone jars containing water**. Perhaps we haven't noticed them because we are rushing around all the time, seeking life and happiness somewhere else. But strangely, mysteriously, miraculously the **best wine** has been with us all the time.

LOVE and GRATITUDE are the only two things that will help you know that within the ordinary water of your life there lies hidden **the true wine of happiness**. You don't have to go to find it somewhere else.

“Be happy....” Come and receive the bread and the wine of life which is always waiting for you . And if we truly knew the Love that is offered us at this wedding feast, perhaps we also might break down in tears. AMEN