

Weekend Readings & Reflections

January 15-16, 2022 – Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection: Think of these first weeks after Christmas as a season of “epiphanies.” The liturgy is showing us who Jesus is and what He has revealed about our relationship with God. Last week and the week before, the imagery was royal and filial—Jesus is the newborn king of the Jews who makes us coheirs of Israel’s promise, beloved children of God. Last week in the liturgy we went to a baptism. This week we’re at a wedding. We’re being shown another dimension of our relationship with God. If we’re sons and daughters of God, it’s because we’ve married into the family. Have you ever wondered why the Bible begins and ends with a wedding—Adam and Eve’s in the garden and the marriage supper of the Lamb (compare [Genesis 2:23–24](#) and [Revelation 19:9; 21:9; 22:17](#))?

Throughout the Bible, marriage is the symbol of the covenant relationship God desires with His chosen people. He is the groom, humanity His beloved and sought after bride. We see this reflected beautifully in today’s First Reading. When Israel breaks the covenant, she is compared to an unfaithful spouse (see [Jeremiah 2:20–36; 3:1–13](#)). But God promises to take her back, to “espouse” her to Him forever in an everlasting covenant (see [Hosea 2:18–22](#)). That’s why in today’s Gospel Jesus performs His first public “sign” at a wedding feast. Jesus is the divine bridegroom (see [John 3:29](#)), calling us to His royal wedding feast (see [Matthew 22:1–14](#)). By His New Covenant, He will become “one flesh” with all humanity in the Church (see [Ephesians 5:21–33](#)). By our baptism, each of us has been betrothed to Christ as a bride to a husband (see [2 Corinthians 11:2](#)). The new wine that Jesus pours out at today’s feast is the gift of the Holy Spirit given to His bride and body, as today’s Epistle says. This is the “salvation” announced to the “families of nations” in today’s Psalm.

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Welcome our discussion on the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Let us begin this time in prayer, praying the words of St. Gianna Beretta Molla, asking for the grace to entrust our lives to Jesus through our Lady’s intercession:

All: O Mary, into your maternal hands I place myself and I abandon myself completely, sure of obtaining whatever I ask of you. I trust in you because you are the sweet Mother, I confide in you because you are the Mother of Jesus. In this trust I place myself, sure of being heard in everything; with this trust in my heart I greet you “my Mother, my trust,” I devote myself entirely to you, begging you to remember that I am yours, that I belong to you; keep me and defend me, O sweet Mary, and in every instant of my life, present me to your Son, Jesus. Amen.

Leader: Today’s readings provide us with beautiful models of what it looks like to be a disciple of Jesus. The influence of Jesus’ mother as the model for Christian discipleship gives us insight into the power of Mary’s intercession and the witness of her devotion to her Son. Through her example and the witness of the wedding servants, we too can have confidence that she will intercede on our behalf and that, through our obedience, we can see answers to prayer. As you watch the video, think about the wedding scene. Place yourself in the scene as one of the servants, as an invited guest, as the couple, or the couple’s parents. With this in mind, what is the significance of Mary’s and Jesus’ actions?

(Play the video on [FORMED.org](#) - [Opening the Word – Second Sunday in Ordinary Time \(Year C\)](#))

Mary, Our Model of Faith

“By the gift of herself, Mary entered fully into the plan of God who gives himself to the world. By accepting and pondering in her heart events which she did not always understand (cf. Luke 2:19), she became the model of all those who hear the word of God and keep it (cf. Luke 11:28), and merited the title of ‘Seat of Wisdom.’ This Wisdom is Jesus Christ himself, the Eternal Word of God, who perfectly reveals and accomplishes the will of the Father (cf. Hebrews 10:5-10). Mary invites everyone to accept this Wisdom. To us too she addresses the command she gave to the servants at Cana in Galilee during the marriage feast: ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ ” (John 2:5).

- Pope St. John Paul II

FIRST READING ~ Isaiah 62:1-5 ~

For Zion's sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her vindication shines forth like the dawn and her victory like a burning torch. Nations shall behold your vindication, and all the kings your glory; you shall be called by a new name pronounced by the mouth of the LORD. You shall be a glorious crown in the hand of the LORD, a royal diadem held by your God. No more shall people call you "Forsaken," or your land "Desolate," but you shall be called "My Delight," and your land "Espoused." For the LORD delights in you and makes your land his spouse. As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you.

This Sunday marks the beginning of 'Ordinary' Time. The season of Christmas has ended. Isaiah is among the group of Jewish exiles who return to Jerusalem (Zion). They see a city in ruins. Some wish to return to Babylon. Isaiah sees in hope and envisions a city shining beautifully 'like a burning torch'. When some think 'Forsaken' Isaiah thinks 'My delight'. When some see 'desolate' Isaiah sees 'Married'.

- *As you look at Yourself, the Church and the World, what do you see? How do you think God sees you, the Church, the world? Do you need to move from self-condemning thoughts to rejoicing thoughts? Imagine God wanting to dance and rejoice with you as if in a marriage dance. What are your feelings?*

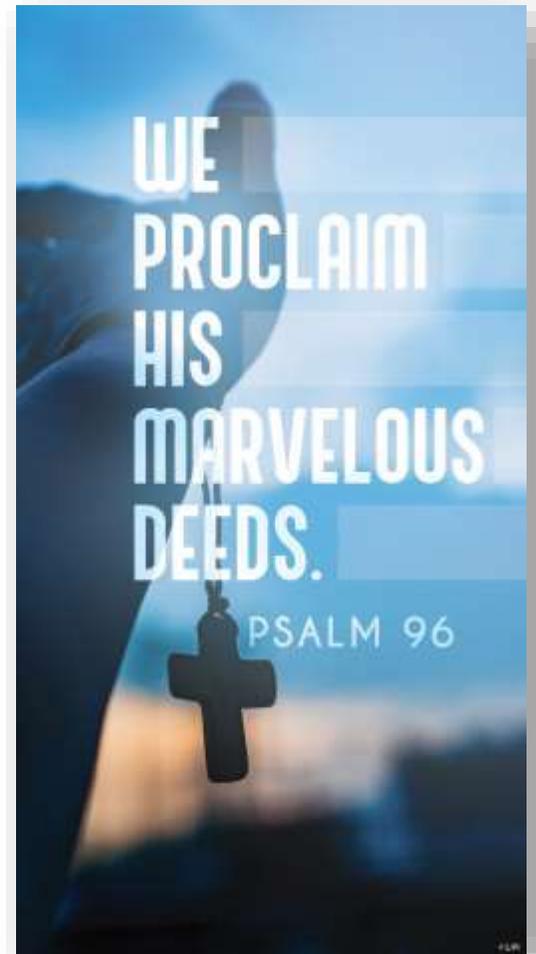
SECOND READING ~ 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 ~

Brothers and sisters: There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another, the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another, mighty deeds; to another, prophecy; to another, discernment of spirits; to another, varieties of tongues; to another, interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.

St Paul is concerned about people in the Corinthian community who consider only Christians who have the gift of tongues have great spiritual powers. Self righteous people have hurt others in the community. St Paul wants to heal the community and remind people there are many gifts (and he places tongues last!).

- *What gifts have you noticed within you? In others? What area of need in the Church matches your passion, energy and gifts?*



GOSPEL ~ John 2:1-11 ~

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from — although the servers who had drawn the water knew —, the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

Mary was attentive to the ordinary needs of people around her. She noticed ‘They have no wine’ and had compassion for them. How attentive are you to the people around you? Mary invited Jesus to help.

- *Have you ever invited someone to do something and their response was ‘I’m not quite ready’. It’s not the right time. Mary encourages Jesus into public ministry – and doesn’t get put off with his response! Jesus reminds her his ‘hour’ is something deeply personal between him and the Father. Have you reached a point in life when your ‘hour’ is near? Is it time to commit to a public witness of your faith? To ministry. Single life. Marriage. Religious life. Priesthood? Will you listen to the Father? Have you had a ‘Mary’ person ask and invite you into service?*

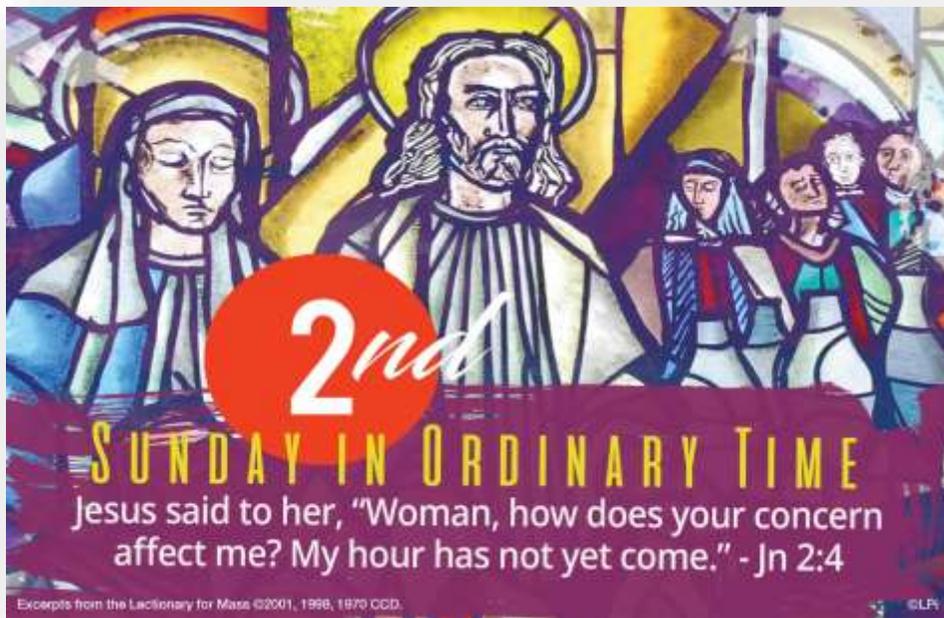
What was your response?

Huge water jars were used for purification and ritual cleansing. The servants were told by Mary to ‘do whatever he tells you.’ They were not asked to perform the miracle. They were simply asked to do what they knew how to do; but to do it when they did not understand why. They filled the jars to the brim. Their obedience and commitment to service allowed the miracle of superabundant wine to be revealed. When we serve God with what we know how to do even when it seems insignificant, God’s abundant grace fills not only us with wonder but provides amazing grace for others.

- *Think of a time you were asked to go the extra mile and do something apparently simple, then saw God work in a special way for others? What was that like for you? For them?*

The Jewish people had a prophecy that the Messiah would bring an abundance of great wine. Jesus’ first public sign in the Gospel of John is to enter a marriage ceremony and replace water with the best wine ever tasted.

- *What do you think this reveals for the Church? For you? For John, a sign points to a deeper reality. What is the difference between water and wine? Water is life-giving and cleansing. Wine is fermented for celebration and joy. Is your spiritual journey more like water or wine?*



MEDITATION

God often reveals his glory to us in the unlikeliest of places - in a cold stable at Bethlehem, at a village wedding party in Cana, on a bloody cross at Golgotha, or on the road to Emmaus. In today's Gospel reading we see the first public sign and miracle which Jesus performed. The Lord Jesus brought great blessing and joy to a newly wed couple and their wedding party. First by His presence, and second by saving them from embarrassment when the wine ran out. Changing water into wine was a remarkable act of kindness; but giving the best to last was unnecessary and unheard of. In the Old Testament wine is seen as both a gift and blessing of God (Deuteronomy 7:13; Proverbs 3:10, Psalm 105:). That Jesus would miraculously produce 120 gallons of the best wine (many times more than needed) shows the superabundance of the blessings which He came to offer.

This miracle signifies the "new rich wine" of the Gospel and it points to the "wine of the new covenant" and the "bread of life" which Jesus provides for his disciples in the Lord's Supper or Eucharist. It also points to the Messianic banquet which Jesus will provide at the end of the age when He comes again in His glory. The miracles of Jesus demonstrate the power of God's love and mercy for his people. God's kindness knows no limits. And the ultimate expression of his love is revealed in the person of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He became flesh for our sake, and he died for our redemption, and he rose that we, too, might be raised up and glorified with him.

- *Do you recognize the glory and presence of the Lord Jesus in your life?*
- *Do you thirst for God and for the abundant life and blessings he offers to you?*
- *Is there anything else you would like to share from your thoughts during the opening video?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: In closing, let us pray that our eyes may be open to the miracles around us:

ALL: Lord Jesus, Your word is power and life. May I never doubt Your love and mercy, and the power of Your word that sets us free, and brings healing and restoration to body, mind, heart, and spirit. Amen.



Leader: (if time, let us offer up our intercessions ... St. Michael... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...)

[Opening reflection was shared from St. Paul Center at <https://stpaulcenter.com/studies-tools/sunday-bible-reflections>]

[video can be found at FORMED.ORG "Opening the Word". Additional reflections can be found at FORMED in "Opening the Word"]

[Discussion questions created by Fr Frank Bird sm, Marist Priest, and distributed by www.maristlaitynz.org, were shared with permission from www.livingtheword.org.nz.]

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