

Cycle C 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1, Is 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.

Responsorial Psalm, Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10

R. (3) Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.

Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all you lands. Sing to the LORD; bless his name.

R. Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.

Announce his salvation, day after day. Tell his glory among the nations; among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.

R. Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.

Give to the LORD, you families of nations, give to the LORD glory and praise; give to the LORD the glory due his name!

R. Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.

Worship the LORD in holy attire. Tremble before him, all the earth; Say among the nations: The LORD is king. He governs the peoples with equity.

R. Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.

Reading II, 1 Cor 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.

Gospel, Jn 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.

His Mother said to the servers, “do whatever He tells you.”

This Sunday, we hear one of the most familiar stories in the New Testament...on the surface, most often it is thought of as just a wedding story. But, if we dig deeper, we start to realize more than just a wedding is going on. We witness an intimate exchange between mother and son. Mary knew her son's potential as only a mother can know. Could this have been her last push for Him to get on with His life? Afterall, He had moved out of her house and already had disciples. Then Mary makes a statement not only for the servers at the wedding, but for His disciples to hear, and in fact for all mankind...for the rest of eternity, *“do whatever He tells you.”*

To put this into context, this Sunday resumes Ordinary Time...Christmas season officially ended last week. And yet, since Advent, every Sunday has focused on some revelation, some manifestation of God: with John the Baptist, the Visitation, then the Nativity, Shepherds, the Holy Family, Jesus the tween in the temple, the Magi, and last Sunday the Baptism of Jesus. Even though the manifestation cycle is technically over, the epiphanies, the “signs” as John calls them, continue into Ordinary Time. Now we hear about Jesus' response to his mother's statement, *“they have no wine.”* He says His hour has not yet come, but then He does the impossible. So how did this event of turning water into wine reveal His glory? We start to comprehend that the Gospel is more than one story. Something new is happening with Jesus in the world... *“do whatever He tells you,”* says it all!

What touches me about today's Gospel is that this sign of Jesus turning water into wine is more than just one miracle of hospitality or graciousness to save a wedding celebration...it is a fountain of signs, of epiphanies of hope and commitment binding our community of believers...first revealed to those surrounding Jesus, and eventually to all mankind, including to us today....even when our cup is empty and our cupboard has run dry.

I think to understand this early story of Jesus, this first miracle at Cana, we need to understand how profoundly it foreshadows the future wondrous signs, the future miracles fostered by water and wine, especially when His “hour” did come at the Last Supper and at Golgatha. We

know how that story ends. At Easter we hear the metaphors of hearts fermenting and changing, with the 4th Cup of the Last Supper Passover meal, and of the pouring out of God's own wine in the blood of His Son, who when hanging on the cross, eternal wine and water flowed from His side...and of His Resurrection when His Church was born to help change the hearts of mankind! Water into wine.

I love the revelation of the 4th Cup of the Last Supper Passover meal that Dr. Scott Hahn writes about. The traditional Jewish Passover Seder service celebrates a meal with four cups of wine. The Passover Seder peaks and then ends with the drinking of the 4th cup of wine.

At the Last Supper, however, Jesus left the Passover liturgy unfinished in the upper room by not drinking the 4th cup. He stated His intention not to drink wine again until He came into the glory of His Kingdom. He refused some "*wine drugged with myrrh*" right before being nailed to the cross (Mark 15:23). Then, at the very end, Jesus was again offered wine (John 19:29; Matt.27:48; Mark 15:36; Luke 23:36). But only John tells us how He responded: "*When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit*" (John 19:30).

You see, it was the New Covenant that was finished...before His life ended! More precisely, it was Jesus' transformation of the Passover sacrifice of the Old Covenant into the Eucharistic sacrifice of the New Covenant...again, metaphorically turning water into wine. His Eucharistic sacrifice as the Passover lamb of the New Covenant, done once, and for all, was complete. His time had come and God's glory was revealed for all to see!

Today some of us might feel as though we are living in the first blush of the wedding feast... with stores of wine and grace that will last forever...but surely, life doesn't work that way! Or, some of us may feel that our cup is already empty. Our "vat" of blessed wine or grace or love, has already run dry. In the shadow of this week's Martin Luther King holiday, I wonder what this civil rights martyr would say if he were alive today, in this country, in today's world... would he ask, "*Where's the good wine?*" Sometimes I think that even his storehouse of

exhilarating rhetoric and the spilling of his blood has moved us no further away from racism than where we were on that Thursday evening in April of 1968.

However melancholy that leaves us on today's celebration of another sign, another epiphany, another manifestation of God, when we dig deeper, today's readings are seen as a joyous invitation of hope and commitment binding us together. The 4th cup and the cross that Jesus would not bypass, but instead drank deeply and embraced, are handed on to us - His Delights, His Espoused. Are we willing "do whatever He tells us?" To drink of this cup and take up our cross?...these are Eucharistic metaphors for denying ourselves and pouring ourselves out in service to others...are we willing to be committed to serve God by serving those whose personal, spiritual, emotional, or physical "vats" have gone dry and whose cupboards are bare?

So...now I trust, that we can think of today's Gospel as much more than just a simple wedding miracle story. His story continues. The epiphany of water and wine are central to our Eucharist celebration. At every Mass at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist when the altar is being prepared, water and wine are mixed in the Cup and a silent prayer is said: *"By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity."* The mingling of the water and wine points to the Incarnation: the mystery of God becoming man. It also points to our call to share in Christ's divine life.

Remember, we don't come to Mass just to receive some-thing. No, we come to receive someone, the Risen Jesus Christ...so together we can then become the Body of Christ to share His love! Water into wine!

[soft piano, "We Shall Overcome"]

We Christians are committed to be relentless disciples of Jesus Christ "doing whatever He tells us." For it is only in drinking deeply of His cup, and in the suffering and commitment of the cross...even in light of so much racial hatred and violence in our cities, at our borders, and around the globe...that we too are lifted by the soaring spirit of dignity and justice in the words of the historic Civil Rights song so closely identified with Martin Luther King's non-violent legacy...that We'll Walk Hand-in-Hand, that We Shall Live in Peace, that We Shall All Be Free, that We Are Not Afraid...Oh, Deep in My Heart, I Do Believe, We Shall Overcome Some Day! And the Church says AMEN!