

2nd Sunday per Annum - C
Isaiah 62:1-5;
I Corinthians 12:4-11;
John 2:1-11
Little Flower - 1/20/19

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today's Gospel tells the story of the wedding feast at Cana. This miracle appears only in John's Gospel, and in John's Gospel, it was the first of Jesus' miracles. It is interesting that the Church chose this Gospel for the Sunday after the feast of the Baptism of Jesus and two Sundays after the feast of the Epiphany. At one point in the Church's liturgical history, the feast of the Epiphany celebrated all three—the visit of the magi, the baptism of Jesus, and the wedding feast at Cana. Like the visit of the magi and Jesus' baptism by John, the miracle at Cana was an epiphany or manifestation of God. The concluding verse of today's Gospel refers to the miracle at Cana as an epiphany: *“Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.”*

In today's Gospel, Jesus came with his mother and his disciples to the wedding feast to celebrate the love of a young man and woman for each other. Jesus' presence at the wedding reminds us of the sometimes forgotten truth that for marriages to grow and develop, couples must not only live their love for each other but also must celebrate their love for each other. Unfortunately, some couples are so caught up in the busyness of everyday living that they forget or neglect to celebrate their love.

In other words, there need to be times when a couple's relationship is front and center, times when couples are very consciously aware of each other and their relationship, very consciously aware of their love for each other. Couples celebrate their relationship, their love, in intimate conversation, at special meals, and on special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, holydays, and holidays. On an even deeper level, couples celebrate their relationship, their love, sexually. In at least one model of intimacy, couples celebrate their relationship, their love, most profoundly by sharing their personal faith with each other and developing a shared faith. In fact, all personal relationships need to be both lived and celebrated.

However, there is another dimension to Christian marriage. In today's reading from Isaiah and throughout the Old Testament, the relationship between God and Israel was described as a marriage or wedding with God as the husband or groom and Israel as the wife or bride. In Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Paul compared the relationship of husbands and wives to the relationship of Christ and the Church and wrote, *“This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church”* [5:32]. In the Latin Bible, the word *mystery* is translated *sacramentum* or *sacrament*. As Catholic Christians, we believe that Jesus took marriage, an already good and holy institution, and elevated it to a sacrament. In other words, Christian couples who love each other are both the sign and the embodiment of Jesus' loving presence in our world, an epiphany of Jesus' loving presence in our world.

My brothers and sisters, today's reading from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians lists several gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul's choice of words suggests that the various gifts of the Spirit are also an epiphany of God because they are a manifestation of the Spirit: *“To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”* This verse can also be translated: *“To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good”* [NAB, 1970]. In other words, all our gifts and talents are given to us not only for our benefit but to be shared with others for the common good. When we share them with others, they become an epiphany or manifestation of God's Spirit. As Jesus himself said, *“Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more”* [Lk. 12:48].