

2nd Sunday per Annum - C
Isaiah 62:1-5;
I Corinthians 12:4-11;
John 2:1-11
Little Flower - 1/16/22

My Brothers and Sisters,

Last Sunday the Christmas season ended with the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord. From now until Ash Wednesday we will be in the season called Ordinary Time. During Ordinary Time, the Church celebrates the mystery of Christ in all its fullness. During Ordinary Time, green is the liturgical color, the color of hope. Because there is not a particular focus, I find it easier to prepare homilies during this season because they do not have to have a singular focus.

Today's Gospel tells the story of the wedding feast at Cana. As I have mentioned the last two weeks, the wedding feast at Cana was originally included in the celebration of the Epiphany as a manifestation of the Son of God. I imagine this was because of the last verse: *"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."*

The beautiful story of the wedding feast at Cana offers at least two insights into love and marriage. Love always has two dimensions. In marriage, couples live love every day in all the things they do with and for each other. However, love also has to be celebrated. Married couples celebrate their love in many ways: intimate conversations, special dinners, gifts, birthdays, anniversaries, holydays and holidays, and physical intimacy. During these celebrations, the love and the relationship come to full consciousness. Celebrating love is as important as living love. Likewise, it is important that all close relationships are both lived and celebrated.

The dialogue between Jesus and Mary is the one disconcerting element in the story. Mary tells Jesus they have no wine. Jesus asks how her concern affects him and tells her that his hour has not yet come. Then Mary immediately tells the servers to do whatever he tells them, which seems a bit presumptuous in light of what Jesus had just said. What was she thinking?

Although this dialogue is between mother and son, I think it contains an important lesson for married couples, children, and friends. Mary knew that she could count on Jesus. Husbands and wives, unmarried couples, parents and their adult children, and friends need to know that they can count on each other, i.e., that the other person will be there for them. Younger children need to know that their parents will always be there for them. Mary was confident that Jesus would be there for her when she presented the couple's dilemma to him.

Today's reading from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians refers specifically to the various spiritual gifts. However, as with the story of the wedding feast at Cana, there are two takeaways beyond the realm of spiritual gifts. The first is obvious. God gives different gifts to different people. Therefore, we are called to respect differences in people, which many times we are not so willing to do.

In the middle of the passage, he writes, *"To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit."* Another translation reads that *"the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good"* [JB, 1970]. When I was growing up, we were reminded at home and at school that it was wrong to waste the gifts God had given us. However, the implication was that they were given to us primarily for our own good. I believe that this verse reminds us that all the gifts God has given us are also for the good of others, for the service of others. It is not enough that we develop them for ourselves.

My brothers and sisters, today's reading from the Prophet Isaiah speaks about the intimate relationship between God and Israel, comparable to the relationship of a bride and groom. The Lord delights and rejoices in Israel. One important truth we have to remember is that God chose Israel not because Israel was a great nation but because God loved Israel. The relationship God had with Israel he has today with the Church. In other words, God loves us each of us just as we are. He wants us to be better, but he loves us just as we are.