

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR C – JANUARY 16, 2022

First Reading

Is 62:1-5

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

As the bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so will your God rejoice in you.

About Zion I will not be silent,
about Jerusalem I will not grow weary,
until her integrity shines out like the dawn
and her salvation flames like a torch.

The nations then will see your integrity,
all the kings your glory,
and you will be called by a new name,
one which the mouth of the Lord will confer.

You are to be a crown of splendour in the hand of the Lord,
a princely diadem in the hand of your God;
no longer are you to be named 'Forsaken',
nor your land 'Abandoned',
but you shall be called 'My Delight'
and your land 'The Wedded';
for the Lord takes delight in you
and your land will have its wedding.
Like a young man marrying a virgin,
so will the one who built you wed you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices in his bride,
so will your God rejoice in you.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 95:1-3. 7-10. R. v.3

(R.) Proclaim his marvellous deeds to all the nations.

Second Reading

1 Cor 12:4-11

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

One and the same spirit distributes different gifts as he chooses.

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose. One may have the gift of preaching with wisdom given him by the Spirit; another may have the gift of preaching instruction given him by the same Spirit; and another the gift of faith given by the same Spirit; another again the gift of healing, through this one Spirit; one, the power of miracles; another, prophecy; another the gift of recognising spirits; another the gift of tongues and another the ability to interpret them. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who distributes different gifts to different people just as he chooses.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

God has called us with the gospel
to share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!

Gospel

Jn 2:1-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

The first of the signs given by Jesus was at Cana in Galilee.

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said, 'Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews; each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water,' and they filled them to the brim. 'Draw some out now' he told them, 'and take it to the steward.' They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from – only the servants who had drawn the water knew – the steward called the bridegroom and said, 'People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink, but you have kept the best wine till now.'

This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him.

Reflection

Today's liturgy invites us to take a detour into the Fourth Gospel and into a marriage scene that the evangelist John places at the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry. Marriage imagery appears from time to time in Israel's prophetic tradition, sometimes in quite confronting or alienating ways, especially in Hosea where God is imaged as male and Israel as God's faithless female spouse. In the first reading from the post-exilic prophecy of Third Isaiah, Jerusalem is the bride, once alienated from God and then fully reconciled with and embraced by God who is named as its "builder". Imaging God, who is neither male nor female, as faithful male and Earth or any facet of the Earth community as unfaithful female is problematic and calls for serious critique.

The link between the passage from Isaiah and the marriage at Cana is fairly tenuous, although the juxtaposition of the two readings in the context of today's liturgy invites us to consider the intimate relationship that our Earth and its inhabitants enjoy with God, its "builder". God's delight is in Earth and in the Earth community, not simply in one city and one people of the Earth. The focus in the gospel story is less on the marriage, however, than on the symbolism of the abundance of wine at the marriage feast. The 8th century BCE prophet Amos had looked to a future time when the mountains would drip sweet wine, and the hills flow with it, a time when God would restore the fortunes of God's people (Amos 9:13-15). An abundance of good food and the best of wines is the image of future salvation deployed by another prophet, Isaiah (Isaiah 25). Today's gospel suggests that these prophetic dreams come to fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. Those who listen to his word and follow his instructions become agents of an extraordinary transformation. This "sign" reminds us to rejoice in and to give thanks for the life-giving nourishment we receive every day from the God-given fruits of the earth. It reminds us that not all have the same access to earth's bounty and calls us to find ways of sharing our abundance with the hungry such as the Hazara people in the mountains of Afghanistan.

The mother of Jesus features significantly in the Cana story. She is attentive to the integrity of the celebration and lets her son know when the wine gives out. This provides the opportunity for Jesus to speak of his "hour": it has not yet come. Jesus addresses his mother as "Woman". He will address her in precisely the same way when the "hour" of his death and handing over of the Spirit finally comes. This "woman" believes in him and invites the servants at the marriage feast to obey his word. While Jesus performs this first "sign" that leads his disciples to faith, the role played by this faith-filled woman casts her in the role of "witness to the light" and proclaimer of the Word that brings life.