

SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

January 16, 2022 C

Facilitator: *Let us take a minute to consciously acknowledge that we are in the presence of God and ask Him to help us to hear the word He wants us to hear this week.*

Pause for a moment and then play a religious song.

Opening prayer: *We are back to ordinary time, O Lord. No fasting or feasting, just common, plain time – days drifting into nights and then dawning new days again. Ordinary time is your time to do extraordinary things, like changing water into wine, into ice and snow; tears into laughter, into hugs and kisses. Let us notice your ways of keeping ordinary time. Help us keep time with you. Amen.*

Response to last week's word: [Facilitator briefly recalls last week's Gospel.] *Let us spend a few minutes sharing how the Word we heard God speak to us last week has unfolded in our lives during the week.*

Facilitator reads focus statement:

The term Ordinary Time refers to the 34 Sundays of the Liturgical Year that are not part of the Advent/Christmas and Lent/Triduum/Easter seasons. Wrapped around these two major seasons are 34 Sundays.

There are two periods of Ordinary Time in our Liturgical Year.

- The first period begins on the day after the *Baptism of the Lord* and continues until Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. This year there are eight Sundays in the first period of Ordinary Time.
- The second period begins on the Monday after Pentecost Sunday and continues until the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent.

The term *Ordinary Time* refers to *ordinal* or counted time: first, second, third, etc. The term is not intended to mean *unimportant*. Every day and every Sunday in our Liturgical Year are important because *every day* is a day that the Lord has made and *every Sunday* is a celebration of the Lord's Resurrection. Yet in another sense, Ordinary Time is ordinary in that it does not focus primarily on the major events in Christ's life that we celebrate during the two major seasons of our Church year. We might say that Ordinary Time developed not so much for what it is, but for what it is not – it is not Advent, Christmas, Lent or Easter Time.

The first and third readings use marital images to describe God's relationship with his people. The second reading speaks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Let us listen to God's word to hear what it is He wants to say to us in these readings today. As you hear a word, you may want to underline it or write it down to remember.

Read the First Reading, the Psalm and the Second Reading, pausing briefly after each one.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 62:1-5

These verses from the third section of Isaiah 56-66 were written during the turbulent years after Israel's return from exile in Babylon. During her exile, Israel felt *'forsaken'* and *'desolate.'* The prophet seeks to reassure the people that God has not forgotten them even though they are disloyal to him. The reading opens with God's refusal to be silent in the face of Israel's misfortune: *"For Zion's sake, I will not be silent."* Nations that hold Israel in contempt will witness the restoration of her status. God, Israel's husband, is coming to reclaim his disloyal bride. There will be a new beginning, a new marriage symbolized

by a new name, *'My Delight.'* A second sign of the new beginning is the promise of reconstruction of the land which will now be called *'Espoused.'* Forgiven and rehabilitated, Israel will be restored to its status as the "espoused and beloved" of God. The God who called us into being offers us a new beginning whenever we call upon him.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 96

This psalm calls for praise and thanks on the lips of those who have experienced firsthand the saving deeds of Israel.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

For the next eight Sundays, the second reading will be from the last three chapters of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. For the next three Sundays, Paul will speak about the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In this reading, Paul is addressing difficulties that have arisen in the community over the exercise of the charismatic gifts. Arrogance and competition over the gifts are threatening to divide the community. Paul reminds his readers of two important facts concerning these wonderful gifts of the Spirit. First, all these gifts are *graces* from God. They have done nothing to earn or deserve them. Second, the gifts are not given so that individuals may think that they are superior to others, but rather for the blessing of the community.

PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL: John 2:1-11

As we listen to this first reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our minds for the content.

**A participant reads the Gospel,
then all pause to reflect.**

As we listen to this second reading of the Gospel, let us listen with our hearts to what Jesus is saying to us. Be aware of what draws us in and what part of the Gospel might be a challenge to embrace. You may want to underline or write down the word you hear.

GOSPEL: John 2:1-11

In John's Gospel, miracles are *signs* intended to manifest the *glory* of God through Jesus and to lead people to *faith*. Toward the end of the Gospel, we read the words: "*Thus did he reveal his glory, and his disciples believed in him.*" Jesus uses a simple wedding occasion to reveal himself as the bridegroom Israel has waited for, for hundreds of years. He is sent by God to woo and wed a new bride, a new Israel, joining Jews and Gentiles into one body.

A central theme in John's Gospel is what scholars call *replacement* theology. John presents Jesus as the one who *replaces* Jewish customs, rituals and feasts with himself. Previously used as a means to holiness, these customs and rituals are now *replaced* by Jesus himself, whose teaching, Death and Resurrection saved us and offer us new life.

"*They have no more wine.*" On a literal level, these words mean that the wine for the wedding has run out. But on a deeper level, it signifies the end of one dispensation and the beginning of another, the end of

salvation through the observance of the law and purification rites, and the beginning of salvation with our acceptance of Jesus by doing whatever he tells us. "*My hour has not yet come,*" is a reference to Jesus' Death and Resurrection. The "*abundance of wine*" is a reference to the resurgence of new life which Jesus brings, and the wine of the Eucharist which symbolizes the new covenant.

Also in his Gospel, John shows Mary as *involved* at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and again at the *end* when she is present at the foot of the cross. Notice how Mary does not draw attention to herself. Rather, she tells the waiters to "*do whatever Jesus tells you to do.*" The essence of faithful discipleship is doing whatever Jesus tells us to do. When it comes to faithful discipleship, Mary is our model. John's Gospel never calls Mary by her name. At the beginning and end of the Gospel, Jesus addresses his mother, "*Woman,*" which defines her larger role in salvation history as the 'New Eve,' the universal woman.

FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. Share with the group or person next to you what spoke to you most in the Gospel. With this first question, try to refrain from commenting on what others said. Just share what spoke to you and then move on to the next person.
2. The second reading speaks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit blesses us with gifts so that we can bless our community. How has the Holy Spirit gifted you so that you can be a blessing to your parish and/or wider community? Might you have a difficult time naming your gift and finding a way to share it with the community?
3. "*They have no more wine*" could symbolize a time when our lives are on empty, when we have no more to give. What helps you to deal with such times?
4. "Everyone serves good wine first... but you have kept the good wine until now." What does this say about the nature of humanity in contrast to the ways of God?
5. The Gospel is a powerful example of Mary's intercessory role before the throne of God. How real is this Marian role in your spirituality?

6. What is the one thing Jesus is saying to us in this Sunday's Gospel about how a disciple should speak or act?

JOURNALING: *Having listened to God's word and listened to others reflections on it, take a quiet moment to reflect on what you are hearing God say to you. Your response will be what you bring to Eucharist on Sunday, asking Jesus to help you respond as He asks of you. When ready, jot down your reflections.*

PRAYING WITH THE WORD

Let us now pause to see how something(s) said in the reading might lead us into shared prayer. Suggestions: *"Holy Spirit help me to see a gift that you may have given me that I am not using to be a blessing to others."* *"Mary, help me to be like you and see when others are in need."*

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Name one way you can act on today's readings. Suggestion: Spend time meditating on the belief that "God is my spouse and I am his beloved." Share the good wine of your companionship with someone who is lonely. Often ask God to bless and make fruitful the gifts he has given you.

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, PETITION AND INTERCESSION.

FACILITATOR: What are we grateful for? For what and for whom do we wish to pray? Suggestion: Pray for all marriages, but especially newlyweds, that they may find the new wine of Christ in each other.

CLOSING PRAYER (together)

Lord, Jesus, you remain the bridegroom come to reveal your Father's extravagant love. In union with many of the saints, we dare to call you the spouse of our souls. May we revel in your passionate love shown on the cross, and reveal that love to those most in need of it.

Prayer of Spouses for Each Other

Lord Jesus, grant that I and my spouse may have a true and understanding love for each other. Grant that we may both be filled with faith and trust. Give us the grace to live with each other in peace and harmony. May we always bear with one another's weaknesses and grow from each other's strengths. Help us to forgive one another's failings and grant us patience, kindness, cheerfulness, and the spirit of placing the well-being of one another ahead of self. May the love that brought us together grow and mature with each passing year. Amen.

From Treasury of Prayers by
Father Eamon Tobin