

HOMILY FOR THE SECONND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
Sunday, 16 January 2022

- Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day

Part Two: reflection on the readings

Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY

Lectionary: 66

Reading I 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.

Alleluia Cf. 2 Thes 2:14

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

God has called us through the Gospel
to possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

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.

PART TWO: HOMILY ON THE READINGS

Two weeks ago, on the Feast of the Epiphany, we remembered the wise men (*magi*) who journeyed from the east to greet the Christ Child in Bethlehem. This was the first Christian pilgrimage.

In that homily, I also said that Pope Francis is reminding us that we are a pilgrim Church. The Pope is asking the local churches around the world to hold synods. He wants us to come together and share our faith with one another so that, together, we might discern the way the Holy Spirit is calling us to move forward with our mission of service to the world.

The Pope wants us to recognize that we, like the wise men of old, are “on the way together.” In ancient Greek, the word for “on the way together” is *syn-hodos*. This is where we get the word “synod.”

Pope Francis wants us to see that if we are to be a pilgrim Church, we must be a synodal Church.

This means that we must listen to one another. We must be humble enough to confess our sins to one another, recognize our mistakes and receive instruction from one another. Of course, we are not always going to agree about the way forward. So, we must learn how to discern the path that lies ahead together as well.

But above all, we must recognize that standing still is not an option. Happily, the wise men were given a star, and we have been given the Holy Spirit to guide us.

For the Feast of the Epiphany, I said that if the Church is to be a faithful pilgrim, it must be a synodal Church. Today, I

want to say that the synod-process the pope is calling us to should be focused on the future of our service to the world.

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) had an insight into service that is helpful.

As a Lutheran theologian, Schweitzer made a great contribution to our understanding of the Bible. He was also an accomplished organist and musicologist. He also became a medical doctor and established a famous clinic in Lambaréné, in West Africa. In his spare time, Albert Schweitzer went up to Oslo to be awarded a Nobel Prize for Peace.

In one of his many lectures, Schweitzer had this to say about service.

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.

I like the way Schweitzer connects service with happiness. The happiest people I know are those who have found a way to be of service to their family and to their neighbors - and even to complete strangers.

This is not a hard position to defend. Look about yourself and see if this is not true in your own experience of people.

But service, and the happiness that comes from a life of service, is part of the Mystery of faith as well. Happiness and service have been woven together forever by the grace that comes to us through our baptism. We say that, in our baptism, we have become "blessed." The Latin word *beatus* simply means "happy."

And the blessedness that comes to us in our baptism is only fully accepted and celebrated when it bears fruit in service.

If we are to be a synodal Church – if we are to be a community of the baptized that is “together on the way” – we would do well to reflect on how the Holy Spirit is calling the Church to find happiness in service to the world.

Look at the second reading for today’s mass. Paul is writing to the Church he established in Corinth and reminding them that their baptism is a call to service.

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

We have been baptized for service and our service itself is a “manifestation of the Spirit.”

Then Paul goes through a list of gifts from the Spirit that lead to service.

Today, I want to comment on just two of these forms of service.

Paul tells us that some have been given the gift of “prophecy” and others have gifts for the “discernment of spirits.” Those who can speak with prophetic voices and those with gifts for discerning the way forward offer a great service to the Church.

At this time in our sojourn together, the people of the Church need to hear prophetic voices. And as we listen to these voices, we need people who can discern the way forward with faith, hope and charity.

Let me say it again: a synodal Church is a Church that is willing to listen, to receive instruction from the prophets the Holy Spirit is raising up in our midst. And moreover, a

synodal Church will pray for the grace to make faithful decisions about how we are to continue our service in the future.

I think we need to be suspicious of those who are nostalgic for the time before the Second Vatican Council. These nostalgics fear the prophets the Spirit is sending us. Pope Francis says that this nostalgia is a “spiritual pathology” that “blocks creativity and makes us rigid.”

Instead of nostalgia for the time before the Council, Pope Francis says we need to have “memory.” We need a prophetic memory of what God has promised to do for the Church and for the world.

Prophecy and discernment - these are gifts from the Spirit to be sure. They are also forms of service rooted in our baptism that are desperately needed in the Church today.

Schweitzer got it right:

The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.

The Holy Spirit is always calling us to happiness. We are called to be *beatus*. And the prophets in our midst are reminding us once again that we will find the happiness God has promised us in lives of service.

This is an exciting time to be “on the path together.”

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* (“divine reading”). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as “a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys”). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don’t rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually “reading” the Bible. Rather, we are “listening” to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the reflection on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?