

HOMILY FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME  
19 January 2025

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Part One: the readings for the day  
Part Two: reflections on the readings  
Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY  
Lectionary: 66

Reading I Isaiah 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 Psalm 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10

R. 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 Corinthians 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

Alleluia 2 Thessalonians 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 John 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: REFLECTION ON THE READING

Fires have come, once again, to California. This time, they have descended on Los Angeles. Before this, they lashed out at our neighbors in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. And before that, of course, this scourge visited us here in Sonoma County.

I want this homily be a gift to our neighbors down south.

Here in Sonoma, we know that a time will come when the flames are extinguished and the smoke will clear. A time will come when the first responders will go home to their families, and, at long last, get some sleep. Children will get

back to school and play outside during recess with their classmates - that is, if their school is still standing.

Here in Sonoma, we also know that a time will come when the world looks away from the ashes of our homes and the remains of our disrupted lives and gives its attention to other people, other places, other things.

When the drama of our burning homes no longer holds the world's attention, the long loneliness of rebuilding our lives with one another begins. Here in Sonoma, we know that this will be the time when our faith becomes all important.

And so, as a gift to our neighbors in Los Angeles, I want to say something about today's Gospel.

You know the story.

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.

And the newlyweds ran out of wine.

Here in Sonoma, I think we can agree, running out of wine at a wedding reception is a disaster. Certainly, as disasters go, this does not compare with a wildfire that burns down a house - but if you're the bride or the groom, it's a disaster.

And, as John tells the story, the mother of the Lord intervenes.

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."

Jesus' mother will have none of this.

His mother said to the servers,  
"Do whatever he tells you."

You know the story. The water is transformed into wine.

At the end of the story, John tells us something curious:

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.

The changing of water into wine is the first of Jesus' "signs" and it took place at Cana, in Galilee, at a wedding banquet that had become a disaster for a young couple just starting a new life together.

Around the year 400 AD, Saint Augustine watched in horror as barbarians sacked and burned Rome for several days. I think it safe to say that this was an even bigger trauma for people of Augustine's day than the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center was for us.

Later, Augustine wrote something remarkable about this disaster:

In order for there to be a new beginning,  
God created human beings.

In creating this fragile universe, God saw that it could become "subject to futility" (as Saint Paul said). Disasters could thwart His purpose in creating the world. Beginning anew would be necessary.

And so, God created human beings.

The miracle of the water changed into wine at the wedding in Cana is about a new beginning. The Lord's first sign is about beginning anew.

And so, we need to understand John's wonderful story in depth. What exactly is this first sign worked by Jesus in Cana of Galilee?

In an obvious way, the sign must be the wine that was once water. But think about the young married couple. Aren't they a sign for us as well? After all, in the midst of their little

disaster, with the help of God's grace, they were able to make a new beginning.

So that the world might begin anew, God created human beings - each and every one of us. This is what Augustine said after the smoke finally cleared from the ashes of Rome.

Beginning anew: this is what we have done here in Sonoma after our fires. It wasn't easy and, for many of us, the scars remain. But it's true: we have begun anew.

And this is the Good News that we have to share with our neighbors down in Los Angeles: like those newlyweds in Cana so long ago and like all of us here in Sonoma who were touched by the scourge of the wildfires that blew over the Mayacamas to burn down our homes, the Lord shows up at the ruins of our wedding banquet and gives us the grace we need to begin again.

Pray for first responders and pray for Los Angeles.



### 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 homily 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?