

FIRST READING: Isaiah 62:1-5

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

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.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10

***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.

***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.

***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!

***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.

***Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.***

SECOND READING: 1Corinthians 12:4-11

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians:

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.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL: John 2:1-11

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John:

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

### **Reflection for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the Year C**

The symbolism used in scripture should never be mistaken for the real thing. The real thing is definitely not Coca Cola either. We all know what Jerusalem is; a city in Israel that has been destroyed and rebuilt many times through out history. What is Zion? It is the hill upon which people have built the city of Jerusalem. I've never been there and suspect that I never will. Why would God wish to save a city, in Isaiah's time, in ruins and overrun by pagans? A city cannot offer praise. Who would want a city as a spouse? When Isaiah made his prophesy he meant God's people not their home town.

It's important to keep that in mind. When we approach the scriptures and their message we seek to discern meaning by which we can live faithful lives. I will always claim the North Side of Chicago as where I was born and raised, but throughout my adult life and within my ministry as a priest, I have only served there for eight years; one year as a deacon and seven years as a priest in two different parishes out of the forty three years I have been ordained. It's been the people I have served and not the streets, buildings and infrastructure. We need God's gift of salvation to live. The places in which we live merely need our maintenance.

I also like to point out that there are many more Jewish people who have never lived in or visited Jerusalem. This passage is for them as well. It's also for us. We have known God's presence in our desolation, God's grace in our frustration, God's healing of our pain and God's forgiveness of our sin. Isaiah's promise is to know that God is near to humbled, broken people. For us, God is a mere thought or memory away. This, I believe, is the meaning of Isaiah's metaphor.

I had an old friend originally from County Mayo in Ireland. In many ways she was a living saint. I never heard her speak ill of anyone. Granted, I only saw her once a year and only in good times.

She had a quote that I've taken or tried to take to heart. Try to hear this with a Brogue. "If everyone was the same, what a boring world this would be!" I think that she, as a daily communicant for her entire life, was deeply influenced by this reading from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. All of us who fear what we call diversity need to heed Paul's words. The greater the diversity the more gifts we can experience.

Today's first two readings fit very well with our milieu. At this writing, we do not yet know the Archdiocesan plan to combine the three parishes of Our Lady Mother of the Church, St. Eugene and us, Divine Savior. The place, the buildings and the names they are called do not make the Church or a parish. It is the people who make up the Church. Each of our three communities has gifts to offer. Our combined gifts will benefit us all. Change can be a challenge. We can dread it in fear or we can anticipate it in hope. God's grace is part of us all. It is God who saves us not our institutions. It is a community of people and not the place that worships. We will always gather together to know Jesus in our midst and share Jesus as we break bread; together.

Let us pray to embrace new people even if we find it painful to embrace a new plan. As God remains with God's people, remember that God is love and we are always God's beloved no matter where we worship. My father, a WWII vet, liked to point out that on the hood of a jeep and in combat it was possible to become Church.

The gospel of John never names the mother of Jesus. Her presence in today's gospel is significant. She moved Jesus to action. This is also the origin of the line, "To Jesus, through Mary," in popular piety for prayer. Jesus actually taught us to pray to the Father through him. "We ask you this, Abba, through Jesus your son." Jesus also taught us to pray to do God's will too. To use Mary as a fulcrum to get God to do what we want contradicts Jesus. Jesus prayed in the garden before he died, "Father, let this cup pass from me; but not my will but thine be done." I mention this as a point of reflection for us as we face challenge and change. What is God's will as God's people combine together?

John went through great lengths to tell the story of the water made wine. Six stone ceremonial bath tubs of about thirty gallons apiece. That's a lot of wine. What do people do with wine? They drink it. What happens when people drink wine? What do Jesus' actions imply? Apparently, if the head waiter can be trusted, it was vintage stuff. What kind was it? Red, white, a rose perhaps? Was it dry or sweet? They had run out of the stuff. This must have been one heck of a party! Why were the barrels stone and not pottery or wooden? The latter were far more common. It's much easier to mold, shape, glaze and fire clay and form and build things made of wood than it is to carve stone. This was some party, spare no expense.

I can interpret the words of the head waiter for what we face. "You have kept the good wine for now?" What can we face in God's grace? The finest wine? I don't think so. We are not, as the Church, a sign of local greatness and accomplishment. We are about showing the greatness of God. It is God's glory that we proclaim. It is for the Kingdom of God that we strive. What is to come will reveal God to a waiting world. Faith, hope and especially love are the gifts God gives us to see what will come. We can experience through the lens of God's gifts.

Isaiah's message speaks of intimacy with God as God's people. My Delight and Espoused are the words he used. Jesus First Sign was in the context of a feast; a wedding banquet. He offered wine for people to drink. Paul spoke of all the gifts we bring to share. These are all gifts that

God has given us to share in service of one another. As we serve each other, we, in turn, serve God.

May God's abundant gifts draw us together in Jesus' Church.

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