

Sunday, January 20, 2019

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading Isaiah 62:1-5

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Responsorial: Psalm 96:1-3, 7-10

Gospel: John 2:1-11

Experiencing Spiritual Renewal through Our Faith in Christ

Jesus . . . revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him. (John 2:11)

Jesus' first miracle was impressive: he turned water into wine. Because it happened at a marriage celebration, you might consider this a special wedding gift for the happy couple. But it was also a miracle performed so that his disciples would see his glory and "believe in him" (John 2:11).

John tells us that this was the first sign that Jesus performed. Then he goes on to recount six more signs, each of which is meant to deepen his disciples' faith—and ours as well. Each sign tells us that when we place our faith in him, he sets us on a path of renewal. He takes our plain, everyday "water" and turns it into choice "wine."

What do the other signs tell us? That Jesus' words have the power to heal us (John 4:46-54; 5:1-9). That he wants to feed us with his Living Bread and calm the storms and anxieties in our hearts (6:1-21). That he wants to open our eyes to see him as the Lord who loves us (9:1-7, 35-39). And that he wants to raise us from our "tombs" of sin and doubt and unbelief (11:1-44).

All of these stories point to God's work of restoring and renewing what is lacking. They tell us that God wants to restore in us the joy of worship and to become for us the source of all blessing.

When you hear this passage proclaimed at Mass today, think about the ways in which you need to be renewed. Maybe Jesus wants to renew your zeal for him or your love for your spouse or your desire to pray. Believe that God is always at work in you, bringing back to life what has been languishing. Just as he did at Cana, he wants to supply you with the choicest of wines. And in the process, he wants to show you his glory.

"Thank you, Jesus, for renewing me. Lord, help me to see your glory so that I can believe in you more deeply."

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* (www.wau.org) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

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Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion:

1. In the First Reading, the prophet Isaiah offers words of hope to the people of Israel, and he tells them that God “delights” and “rejoices” in them: *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.*
 - How would you describe how God has fulfilled the words above for the people of Israel?
 - In what ways do these words apply to us as Christians? How do they personally apply to you?
 - In the reading, God’s joy is compared with the joy of a bridegroom for his bride. In what ways does your life reflect a joy in what God has done for you? What steps can you take to increase your “joy in the Lord”?
2. In the Responsorial Psalm, we are called to *Announce his salvation, day after day. Tell his glory among the nations; among all peoples, his wondrous deeds* and to *Say among the nations: The LORD is king.*
 - In what ways do you see these words as a call for you to “announce” God’s salvation and “tell” others of his “glory” and “wondrous deeds”?
 - What specific opportunities are available to you this year in your church, at work, in the community, or at home to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to others? How can you respond to these opportunities?
3. In the Second Reading, St. Paul speaks of the spiritual gifts we have received from God: *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.* Paul goes on to describe what these individual gifts include. The reading ends with these words: *But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.*
 - Do you believe that the spiritual gifts listed in the Second Reading are still available today? Why or why not?
 - How well do you know what spiritual gifts God has given you? What practical steps can you take to gain a greater understanding of these gifts?
 - What can you do, individually, or as a group, to use the spiritual gifts you have received *for some benefit*, including your parish community?
4. In the Gospel Reading, after Mary speaks to Jesus about the lack of wine at the wedding in Cana, she speaks these words to the wine servers: *Do whatever he tells you.* The reading goes on to describe Jesus’ first miracle, the changing of water into wine, and ends with these words: *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.*
 - Why is Mary’s words to the wine servers an example of Mary’s great faith?
 - How has your own faith been built up, as God touches you and speaks to you through your prayer and scripture reading and through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist?
 - Have you ever experience a time when you sensed God was speaking a specific word to you in your heart? How did you respond and what was its impact on your life? What do you believe God is asking of you now?
5. The meditation is a reflection on the Gospel Reading, including these words: *Jesus . . . revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him* (John 2:11). The meditation ends with these words: *When you hear this passage proclaimed at Mass today, think about the ways in which you need to be renewed. Maybe Jesus wants to renew your zeal for him or your love for your spouse or your desire to pray. Believe that God is always at work in you, bringing back to life what has been languishing. Just as he did at Cana, he wants to supply you with the choicest of wines. And in the process, he wants to show you his glory.*
 - The ending words of the meditation speaks of some specific ways we may need to be renewed by the Lord? Which ones apply to you?
 - What other areas of your life would you like to see the Lord *supply you with the choicest of wines* and *show you his glory*?

Take some time now to pray and thank the Lord for his work of renewal in your life. Ask him for the grace to see, in some way, his glory. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

“Thank you, Jesus, for renewing me. Lord, help me to see your glory so that I can believe in you more deeply.”

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is currently a member of the board of directors of the ChristLife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization (www.christlife.org), a member of the National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (www.nsc-chariscenter.org), and a board member of The Love of Christ Foundation. Prior to this, Maurice was the founding executive director of the National fellowship of Catholic Men, a chairman of the board of *The Word Among Us* (www.wau.org), and a director of partner relations for The Word Among Us Partners ministry. He can be contacted at mblumberg@wau.org or mblumberg@aol.com.]