

The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Jan.19/20 ...2019)

We have finished the Advent/Christmas Season and celebrated the Holy Family, The Epiphany, and the Baptism of the Lord. Now we move into the Ordinary Season of the Liturgical year and begin with the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time we will stay in Ordinary Time through the 8th Sunday, which is March 3rd, and then on March 6th we will celebrate Ash Wednesday which will launch us into the Lenten season, and we will begin our preparations for celebrating The Easter Season.

As we begin the Ordinary Season you will notice the Green Color vestments, and cloths, that denotes it is Ordinary time.

What a delightful way to begin the Ordinary Season ! These Readings today are just powerful ! The 1st Reading from the Prophet Isaiah, speaks of the great times to come for the Chosen People, Israel. God's people are at one of their lowest moments in history. The people are in exile, all of their great hopes of God taking care of them appear to be dashed ! Jerusalem lay in ruins, and the great city's plight reflected the experience of the whole nation. Israel, once the 'Bride of God' was now like a widow, without children to support her.

However the prophet promises, that her husband, God, has not forgotten her. There will be a new 'Wedding Feast,' and God and His people will once again be like Newlyweds. This Prophecy was most completely fulfilled in the arrival of Jesus, who replaced the old order with the new. This is best symbolized in the setting for the beginning of His public Ministry A Wedding Feast at Cana in Galilee ! How awesome is that

All of the Old Testament prophecies had spoken of a wedding feast the Bride and the Groom celebrating and all who were invited celebrating along with them, with tasty foods and rich sweet wine flowing in abundance ! Saint John in his Gospel notes Mary's attendance at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, encouraging Him regarding the needs of all present. Again Saint John has her present at the endat the foot of the Cross. It is an important little detail ! Because isn't that what mothers doalways present. Mary associated with the whole of His ministry.

So let us take a much closer look at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry there is so much to learn from looking closely at the events :

1. The Old Testament attempting to illustrate God's relationship with His people is most often described as a bridegroom and his bride. Here it is!
2. In describing the Joy God finds among His people, it uses the image of a Wedding Feast. Here it is ! The very beginning of His public ministry.
3. His first miracle is recorded here changing water into wine. Now it is important to realize it wasn't just a little wine It was an abundance of wine The prophets had foretold an 'Abundance of Wine' in the Messianic Days. Here it is ! Jesus provided just that !
4. Those six stone water jars were capable of holding somewhere between twenty and thirty gallons each. We get a clear understanding of Jesus' Generosity, and the warmth and care of His heart. It would be easy for one to say "Wow there's a Party-Man, right after my own heart". but naturally, that would be just a greatly diminished view of what was really taking place.
5. To see this powerful miracle as just a 'once off' amazing episode, would also diminish greatly, what was really happening. It was not about the power to change water into wine it was a wonderful and delightful, foreboding of what His Ministry would be about It wasA declaration that God had come to 'visit His people' and meet them in their need, and a New Order of things was being ushered into place !
6. Jesus began His public Ministry at a Wedding Feast, the most prophesied image of the 'coming kingdom.' The wine ran out what an important detail I am sure you have had that experience in your own life many times We are almost out of wine it could be bread, food, clothes, friends, relationships, patience, understanding, peace, wisdom, knowledge, time, anything !
7. We have all experienced a sense of something running out ! The Gospel today is an assurance that it won't run out if we are in Jesus. It may appear to be running low, but it won't run out if Jesus is Lord of my life. What a powerful declaration, what an awesome truth.

8. The wine running out was merely emblematic, it was a clear way of expressing that the old religion, the old observances, the old expressions of 'going-it-alone', making my own way to the kingdom, doing it my way was of no further value ! The way to the kingdom was now through Jesus! As we say : Through Him and With Him and In Him! He is the Way!
9. What Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, was an invitation to faith in Him, and a declaration that once we are in Him and He in us, we will Not run out of what we most need.
10. As we follow Jesus along the way in the Gospel we see this truth clearly borne out.
11. What Jesus did there at Cana in Galilee, was not a once-off, It pointed to what He would do Again, and Again, and Again ! Throughout His Ministry.
12. Everywhere He went in His travels, The Old was made New !
For the widow at Nain: It was turning her tears into laughter.
Mourning into Joy. For Zacchaeus: it was turning Selfishness into Love.
For the Prodigal Son it was: Turning one who was Lost, into one who is now Found ! Brokenness to Healing. For the Woman at the Well: it was turning Non-Acceptance into Acceptance ! For the Laborers in the Vineyard: it was a proclamation that..... All are equal in His Sight ...
All are called to the same Single Reward. There is only one reward. For the Thief on Calvary: He changed his Despair into Hope ! And on Easter Sunday Morning: He turned Defeat into Victory He turned Death into Life !
13. His very presence could change the lives of those who encountered Him ! If they wished Him to, and let Him do it ! No force whatsoever all invitation !
14. What a Brilliant Story The Greatest Ever told !

This week — yes Homework, I would like to invite you to reflect on :
What areas of my life could Jesus Jesus turn Water into Wine if I would just let Him ?

—Fr. Gerry Hurley