

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

Last Sunday, the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, was the first Sunday in the Ordinary Time. Our reflection focused on the feast. Part of today's reflection, therefore, is on the meaning of the Ordinary Time in the Catholic Church's liturgical seasons. The Ordinary Time refers to those periods that fall outside of the major liturgical seasons. The present segment of the Ordinary Time continues until Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. The Church uses green vestments during the Ordinary Time. Green is the color of life, renewal, energy, growth, health, fertility and safety. These meanings of green color are Church's prayers for each one of us. On the meaning of Ordinary Time Jeffery Mirus writes, "If the faithful are to mature in spiritual life and increase in faith, they must descend from the great mountain peaks of Easter and Christmas in order to pasture in the vast verdant meadows of *tempus per annum*, or Ordinary Time."

The background of the first reading is that when the Jews returned from Babylonian exile (538B.C.), they found Jerusalem in ruins. Its temple, walls, and houses were razed to the ground. Desolation was everywhere. The sight of this left the returnees in distress and despair. God sent Prophet Isaiah to console the people. God promised through Isaiah: "I will not keep silent. I will not be quiet... You shall be called by a new name pronounced by the mouth of God... 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'..." As we begin a new year, these words and promises are for each one of us, especially for any one in desolation due to events of life.

It is relevant at the beginning of the year that St. Paul reminds us in the second reading that God has blessed each of us with spiritual gifts for the benefit of all. St. Paul names some of the spiritual gifts: wisdom, knowledge, healing, prophecy, discernment, varieties of tongues and interpretation of tongues. There are many more gifts. Our spiritual gifts are not supposed to be hidden. They are supposed to be shared. As we begin a new year, we are invited to resolve a better way of sharing our spiritual gifts for the benefit of as many people as possible. God makes promises to us in the first reading. But then, God's promises come to fulfilment through the power of God's Spirit working in us, and as we share with one another God's gifts. We do not expect the fulfilment of God's promises if God's Spirit is absent or inactive, and when we do not share God's gifts with one another.

Again, the Gospel is very relevant for our reflection as we begin a new year. One can only imagine how the wedding would have continued with no wine. The Gospel says, "the mother of Jesus was there [and] Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding." The role Mary played in saving the couple from confusion and embarrassment is very important. She said to Jesus, "They have no wine." Jesus replied and clearly stated that his hour had not yet come. But, because Mary interceded for the couple, the hour of Jesus began that moment. Then, he changed water into wine.

Mary instructed the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." The servers filled six stone jars with water as Jesus directed them. I wonder what was going on in the minds of the servers as they filled the stone jars with water. It would have been absurd for them to be told to fill stone jars with water when the problem was lack of wine. Nonetheless, they followed Mary's and Jesus' instructions. The servers' obedience to Mary and to Jesus enabled the miracle. The servers' obedience teaches us to trust Jesus even when from human reckoning it is meaningless to trust. Had the couple not invited Jesus and Mary to the wedding would not have had a happy ending. This passage, also, teaches us that where Jesus and Mary are invited 'wine' will never run out. Let us invite them, through our prayers, to everything that is going on in our life. Mary is the Mother of Perpetual Help. Her powerful intercession opens doors of Divine Mercy.

To recap, (1) The green vestments of the Ordinary Time symbolize life, renewal, energy, growth, health, fertility and safety which the Church wishes us. If we are to mature in spiritual life and increase in faith, we must pasture in the Words and Sacrament of the Ordinary Time. (2) God's promises come to fulfilment through the power of God's Spirit working in us, and as we share God's gifts with one another. (3) Trust Jesus even when from human reckoning it is meaningless to trust. (4) 'Wine' will never run out where Jesus and Mary are invited.