

## Homily – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle C

Reading 1: Isaiah 62: 1 – 5

Psalm: 96

Reading 2: 1Corinthians 12: 4 – 11

Gospel: John 2: 1 – 11

Theme: *Jesus is the sign of God's glory through one Spirit in all believers.*

Signs are an important way to communicate information quickly. When the information may be a matter of life or death, it is important for the sign to be very clear.

The aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk was docked in the port of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. One morning, as the local fishing fleet passed by on its way out to sea, a boat came too close to the ship. A Marine held up a sign warning the captain to stay away, and he complied. But the next day, the boat was back. This time, the fisherman held something. The nervous Marine pointed to his rifle. The fisherman lifted the object and unfurled it, revealing a sign of his own. In perfect English it read "Your Sign Is Upside Down."

In the Gospel today we heard the story of the changing of water into wine. It ended by saying "Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory." I wonder how many times people may have thought that Jesus was holding the sign upside down?

In this story, no one is healed or forgiven. We are told that the only people who knew about the miraculous source of the wine were the servers who drew it out of the stone jars. At first Jesus seems to be reluctant to even get involved. He says, "How does your concern affect me?" What is going on here?

Many people over the centuries have discussed the symbolism in this story. The stone jars were used to hold water for washings that were required for purification rituals. Jesus changes the water into wine as a sign that God has entered into our lives, and purification occurs through him. That is why the headwaiter observes, "You have kept the good wine until now."

The wine is also a symbol of the great feast expected when the messiah would restore the kingdom of Israel. In the context of the wedding, the celebration marks the time when God would take up the people of

Israel like the groom takes his bride. We heard about this expectation in our first reading from the prophet Isaiah.

As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you.

As a bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so shall your God rejoice in you.

As miracles go, this one doesn't appear to amount to much. We don't know the names of the bride, the groom or any of the people at the wedding. Even the Blessed Virgin is only referred to as "the mother of Jesus." In many other miracle stories, people are praising God, offering thanks, and expressing their amazement at Jesus. This story ends with the statement, "his disciples began to believe in him." It all seems so ordinary.

This Mass celebrates the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time. That means that we are not in one of the special seasons like Christmas or Easter. But at the same time, no Sunday can be considered ordinary if we remember that God is with us in a special way. In His Word, in His Body and Blood, he is really present here.

St. John never calls the action at Cana a miracle. It is a sign pointing us to Jesus and the Father who sent him. Jesus takes on our human nature to reveal the mind and heart of God. This is the God who cares for the insignificant, the overlooked, and the ones carrying heavy burdens. This story takes place in Galilee because that is where God can be with the poor.

This week our attention has been focused on Haiti. For many years these people have suffered from poverty, malnutrition and disease. Where do we find a sign of God's presence there?

As Christians, we believe that God can bring good out of the most evil situation. We have an obvious opportunity to witness our faith in the response of the world to the earthquake victims. For many years the United States and the United Nations have worked with local leaders to improve conditions in this country that shares an island with the Dominican Republic. Yet the people continue to suffer from corruption, crime and poverty. Perhaps this is the crisis that will finally get things turned around.

Last week we celebrated the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Jesus was not baptized in order to receive the Holy Spirit. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit have always been One. His baptism was a sign for us that through water and the Spirit we become children of God. Through

the Spirit we are given the gifts needed to bring good out of bad in situations like that in Haiti.

Even though we acknowledge the Spirit, we can wander off course. Our sign gets upside down. This is what happened in Corinth. Christians there were divided over how they prayed, and which gifts of the Spirit were most important. This situation was addressed by St. Paul in the reading we heard today. "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."

So, we ask ourselves, "What gift has God given me? How do I use that gift to serve others?" Or, to put it in terms John might use, "How am I a sign of God's active presence in the world? What is there about my words and actions that point people in God's direction?" We gather together here because we can help each other to keep our signs right-side up.

The Spirit was manifested in Jesus at Cana so that his disciples could begin to believe. The Spirit is also manifested in us today. Inspired by the Spirit we serve as priests, deacons, readers, and extraordinary ministers. We serve as ushers and greeters. We visit the sick at hospitals and extended care homes. We work at soup kitchens, Christian Service and Outreach East. We serve funeral dinners, spaghetti dinners and family breakfasts. At the urging of the Spirit we respond to the needs of the people of Haiti. We do this in unity with all Christians throughout the world.

It is fitting that this week marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Mission Congress in Edinburgh, Scotland. This event is considered the beginning of the contemporary ecumenical movement. For that reason the Vatican and the World Council of Churches have designated this as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. As we work with other Christians to relieve the suffering, we can pray especially this week that our divisions will be healed, and that the One Spirit is drawing us together to worship the One God.

This holy objective – the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ – transcends human powers and gifts. We place all our hope in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. [CCC#822]