

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

This is a favorite Gospel story. Just mention the wedding feast at Cana and most Christians will nod their heads. Yes, we remember that one. Imagine being there as a simple guest. You saw that the wine was running out. You might have felt sorry for the newly married couple. What embarrassment!

Then you saw the servants filling the jars with water. It's said that available water would be that which was used for foot washing. A little later the servants are filling glasses with *that* water. Your attention is now fixed on some people who begin drinking it. Smiles spread across their faces. Delicious, they say. You wonder what's going on.

A Gospel Word for the Home

John 2:1-11

John begins his Gospel with this story. He calls it "a first sign." As readers or hearers we ask, "A sign of what?" The Kingdom of God is at hand. God's generous love is at work. The wedding feast is salvaged just before it crashes on the rocks of embarrassment. Everyone is happy: great wine and good company. This is worth celebrating. In other places the Gospels portray the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, as a Great Feast.

The prophet, Isaiah, used this image to talk about what was coming in terms of God's entrance into our history. God was a God who loved and took pity on all of us in our need (as happened at Cana). We can rejoice and be glad. Celebration is in order. One of the songs in the musical, *Godspel*, has the phrase, "Let's have some wine." While the coming of God's Kingdom can be challenging, even difficult at times, there will also be moments of celebration. It's not intended to all be uphill.

Thought for the Week

What is your primary image of God? This question is worth asking over and over again because its answer is slippery. It's like holding water in your hands. It tends to be there for a while, but no matter how hard you try, eventually you have empty hands. So you need to get a refill. It is the same with our image of God. Refreshing our image is always timely. Today's Gospel reading offers us this opportunity.

John does not describe the beginning of the public life of Jesus as a boot camp where everyone must rise at dawn, do multiple exercises, run a mile or two, and then prepare breakfast after you have had to go to the chicken coop to find some eggs. Nor does he offer a list of terrible evils besetting the world which sets the stage for a serious battle. As an aside, there's a church in the Midwest that has a sign at the exit of the parking lot that reads, "You are entering the world, adjust your armor." No, there is nothing like that in Gospel according to John. Rather it begins with the most enjoyable of all gatherings in those times, a gala wedding feast where the wine is abundant. Imagining a God who does that will surely enliven your spirit.

Parent Survival

Is God on your side, or not? Or is God indifferent to you and your life? Some would say that God is distant and disinterested, if there's a God at all. Our Christian faith offers us a view of God that is almost too wonderful to believe. Through Jesus, God brought health and healing to the world. The wedding feast at Cana describes something about how God is with us. God is not a law office or judge, a military commander or warrior. God is one who cares about us in good times and in times that are not so good. We are made in God's image and so there are expectations about our own goodness.

But they don't imply that life must be dreary and dismal. It can be fun. In fact, it should be fun. There's a saying that you can invite people to a celebration, but you can't force them to have fun. Implied is that joy and happiness are choices. Some think that religion is for serious people, not party-goers. The wedding feast at Cana suggests that God's Kingdom is especially for party people.

Car or Meal Talk

Ask: When do we really enjoy ourselves as a family? Can we do anything to repeat these kinds of experiences?

One-Line Prayer

God of life, loosen us up to enjoy the full measure of the happiness that you wish for us. Amen.