

January 20, 2019

Is 62:1-5; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Jn 2:1-11

REFLECTION ON THE MASS:

After we complete the Eucharistic Prayer and during this Jesus has become present on the altar, and we have participated in the eternal sacrifice of Jesus - we return to our own time. We leave the eternal moment of God's existence that we have touched upon and we now step back from that mysterious moment and rise to our feet. Grateful for what God has just done for us, grateful for the privilege God has shown us in allowing us to participate in that great sacrifice of Jesus Christ we turn to the Father. Mindful of our connection to God in Jesus' body, remembering our baptism by which we are made children of God, we now offer the prayer that Jesus gave us when he was asked by his disciples to teach them how to pray. In the "Our Father" we acknowledge and praise God who is in heaven, we pray for God's kingdom of peace to come to the world, we then ask for our daily bread as we are gathered around the bread which is now the Body of Jesus. We then acknowledge that on the altar is the Lamb of God, who has been sacrificed for us, and as the body of the lamb is broken and prepared for us to receive we ask for God's mercy. Finally we look at the Lamb of God, acknowledge that we are unworthy to receive, and ask that we be healed.

HOMILY:

We hear in the prophet Isaiah today: *No more shall people call you "Forsaken," or your land "Desolate," but you shall be called "My Delight," and your land "Espoused."* These words "Forsaken," "Desolate," "My Delight," and "Espoused" are all actually proper names in the Hebrew language. Names are important in scripture - they are not just words to be used to know what to call a person when you see them, they are not just so that there is something to put on an ancient driver's license - they are meant to be words to describe who the person is or what they are. It is like a person having the name "Brilliant one" or "Destined for Greatness" or "Looks Kinda Funny" - that's a weird one, just imagine someone writing down their name "Looks Kinda Funny Smith." What God is saying through the prophet is that I will change not just your name, but that that change will point to a greater change, it will mean a difference in who you are and what your destiny is. And it is a change for the better.

God enters into each of our lives when we call. God has a love for us that is waiting for us to approach. But we must approach and open ourselves to the God who seeks to fulfill us and change our condition. This brings us to the wedding at Cana in the Gospel. This wedding story tells us about how to approach God in Jesus, and also what he does in response to that approach. First how to approach. Look at Mary approaching Jesus with a concern *They have no wine* - Jesus responds with the phrase *how does your concern affect me?* Mary comes, not with her own problem but someone else's problem, she lays it before Jesus with such sincerity that someone

else's problem has become her own - that's why Jesus calls it *her* concern. She does not tell him what to do - notice that - she doesn't say "Now Jesus, I want you to go and whip up some wine for these nice people for your mother." By the context it is clear she does not know what he might do, she doesn't know how he might respond. The only one she tells to do something are the waiters - she gives Jesus the concern expresses it deeply and then tells the waiters to *Do whatever he tells you*. She puts trust in her son that although his time had not yet come, although this was not his concern directly, that he would do something. She resigns herself to God's will and will accept whatever response Jesus makes (a "yes" or a "no"). This is a model for us - showing us how to approach Jesus with our concerns - and it is also a demonstration of how Mary brings the concerns that we entrust to her to bring to Jesus.

What Jesus does is really interesting. His order to the waiters could have been "go away" he could have told them "go up the street there is a person who has wine for you" - instead, he directs them to fill ceremonial water jars - a symbol for the old way of doing things, and he transforms the water in those jars into wine. He meets the need he didn't have to, and shows us how he can take the old and make it new and better. The fact that this event happens at a wedding is important as well. It makes us think of the line from the first reading: *For the LORD delights in you and makes your land his spouse*. So many times the relationship between God and the people, or Jesus and the church, is represented as a marriage. In the end, this story is not just about Jesus answering a request, it is the last event in the Epiphany and points to the Eucharist where bread and wine become something new and better - the Body and Blood of Jesus. By sharing in this, we deepen our union in the one body of Jesus. God takes away our being forsaken by making the Church his spouse and joining with us in one body - and as Jesus will say in the Gospel of Matthew referring to marriage: *So they are no longer two, but one flesh*.

This is the body we hear spoken of in the second reading. This body to which we were joined at Baptism, that we deepen our connection with each time we receive the Eucharist. A body in which we enjoy the dignity of union with God no matter how other people look at us. A body in which the Spirit has distributed gifts so that *To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit*. When feeling disconnected, alone, forsaken, and rejected we can approach Jesus with our needs, we can resign ourselves to accept and follow whatever answer he gives, and we can allow ourselves to be joined by the Eucharist more deeply into that body in which the Spirit dwells. So that by the power of God and the gifts given to the members of that body we can have purpose and be transformed into that faithful spouse in which God delights.