

2ND SUNDAY ORD. (C) YOU SHALL BE CALLED MY DELIGHT

One very important way God expressed His relationship with the Israelites was like that of husband and wife. In the scriptures (eg. Hosea, Song of Songs, Ephesians), Israel was considered the bride of God. So any time the Israelites offended God, it was considered as unfaithfulness to her spouse. It is clear that the relationship between husband and wife is closer than even between siblings. This tells us how God desires to be very close to His people, and He delights in them.

When being punished for her unfaithfulness, Israel was promised a new state of life, that she was not going to be under bondage again. She would be given a new name, and God would delight in her as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride. She would be special in the hand of the Lord. God would change her situation to the delight of nations and kings.

The hopeless situation the Israelites found themselves in while in exile was like what happened at the wedding at Cana. Jesus was asked by the 'Queen Mother', Mary, to save the situation. The wedding feast at Cana was also considered as Christ saving the Church by washing her clean with His own blood. This was what St. Paul told the Church in Ephesus, comparing the relationship between husband and wife with the relationship between Christ and the Church. "Christ loved the Church and sacrificed Himself for her to make her holy by washing her in cleansing water," (Eph.5:25-26).

Since God never changes, and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, this relationship between God and man has not changed. This is the assurance we are given today. We often have different ideas about this relationship. We often consider it like the relationship between a servant or slave and his master. We fail to accept to be close to God and His Son.

Because God wants us to have this close relationship with Him, God has sent us His Spirit through Christ to work within us. The Father, the Son, and

the Holy Spirit, want us to have the same unity and relationship existing among them and with one another. Each is given different gifts by the same Spirit to offer different service to the same Lord, and it is the same God who works within all of us. As we heard, "To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit". The benefit is "to knit God's holy people together for the work of service to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in faith and knowledge of the Son of God," (Eph.4:12-13). God knows our problems and the solutions to them more than we are aware of. Thus He was able to redeem the Israelites and it was like a dream to them; "When the Lord delivered Zion from captivity, it was like a dream; our mouths were filled with laughter, and our lips with songs," (Ps.126:1-2).

In a similar way, when the bridegroom and the bride were short of wine, they were not aware of it, but when their problem was solved by Christ, it was to them that praises were showered. They had no idea where the good wine came from. So it is Christ who can redeem us and save us from shame and disgrace. He is the one who can solve our numerous problems we encounter every day in our lives.

God delights in you and me, and He wants us to remember the marriage covenant we entered into with Him when we were baptized. He has given us a new wine, which is the Spirit, to make us strong and bold and to draw us closer to Himself. Without His wisdom and knowledge, we cannot discern what is good and bad. His Spirit will bring us faith and enable us help our brothers and sisters who are sick. Giving us the spirit is a sign of sharing with us His power to heal and do great things.