

2nd Ordinary Sunday
January 16, 2022
“Gifts for God’s Reign”

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

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

It comes as no surprise to say that our culture is driven by competition. On every level, there seems to be a competitiveness that leads to little more than eventual unhappiness. To be the best at anything can bring personal satisfaction. But how was that success achieved? Was it at the expense of fairness, honesty, morality, and integrity? Was it by running roughshod over other contenders?

Another problem with competitiveness is that we can become envious of others. We resent their talent or their good fortune. We can also become discouraged, distressed – and even depressed. Perhaps the worst part of competitiveness is that it can put people at odds with one another. It can destroy basic human relationships. People can begin to look down on others – or think that they, themselves, are superior.

After scores of years in exile, the Chosen People were allowed to return to the Promised Land. But once there, they soon became competitive. They began to fight for land in that small country. The newly returned wrangled with those who had maintained the land in their absence. It was not long before many began to forget the Lord God. Moreover, many began to think that they were superior to others.

For the few who still remained faithful and devoted, Isaiah had words of encouragement. God had a much greater and far-reaching plan than what the masses had envisioned. It encompassed every person of every race and nation. Ultimately, there would come a time when all infighting would cease. God would reign supreme. God would work wonders in their midst. God would be intimately close to His people. His reign would be in the human heart and spirits. And people would feel good about others and about themselves!

The beginning of that special Reign took place when Jesus came. The Father sent His Son – born of the Virgin Mary. Unfortunately, most of those who should have discovered Jesus, missed who he was when he was in their midst.

Jesus was too ordinary, at first. But later, he became a threat to their power, control, wealth, and lifestyle. Moreover, the Reign of God over the whole Earth did not fit into their limited vision. For them, Israel had a special election, a superior status, and an exclusive destiny!

Turning to the Gospel, Jesus and his disciples probably were invited to the wedding at Cana, out of courtesy toward Mary. Mary, herself, was probably helping the hosts. Realizing they had run out of wine, she shared her concern with her son. Perhaps, Jesus could do something.

However, Jesus resisted doing anything extraordinary. It was not yet the Father's time for his breakout and mission to the people. Nevertheless, Jesus intervenes in a quiet way. And we are told that, with the miracle, his disciples began to believe in him.

Jesus was more than just a carpenter from Nazareth. He was someone to take seriously and could be a good friend. Besides, who could say where a journey with him might lead – Or what their association with him could become for them!

Sad to say, there has always been competitiveness in the Christian Community. The disciples argued among themselves about who was the greatest. James and John wanted to be on the right and left of Jesus whenever his worldly kingdom was established. And St. Paul had to chide the Corinthians. They were in competition over whose spiritual gifts were greater and most important.

Fortunately, St. Paul's teaching fits every situation, for every person, in every generation and time. All gifts come from God. Those gifts are given to each person according to what God expects from us. These gifts are not for our personal aggrandizement. They are given to be used for and shared with others. They are a means for furthering the Reign of God in our midst. Furthermore, we fail if we misuse them – if we hoard them – refuse to share them – or are envious of the gifts that God gives to others.

Brothers and Sisters, as I mentioned earlier, power, wealth, and lifestyle – can never bring us lasting happiness. Only a life with God and a relationship with Jesus can fill our hearts, souls, and spirits. So, let us pray, today, that we will use our gifts according to God's design and plan – for us, for others, for the world. May God deliver us from that kind of competitiveness that destroys the humanity of others and ourselves – And may we always be grateful that the Reign of God is continuing to unfold in our own time!

Amen.

January 16, 2022

Msgr. Russell G. Terra