

## THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR – C

The Christmas season ended with the Baptism of Jesus when he was anointed to begin his public ministry, we are now in ordinary time that is liturgical time outside Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter. The gospel reading on this Second Sunday is always about Jesus beginning his public ministry. This Year C we have the story of the marriage feast at Cana in Galilee when Jesus changes water, symbolising the teaching in the O.T., into rich wine, symbolising Jesus' teaching in the N.T. The evangelist tells us Jesus 'revealed his glory' and his disciples believed in him. This is the third Epiphany. 1<sup>st</sup> to the Wise Men, 2<sup>nd</sup> at Jesus' baptism the Spirit descends and the Father declares, 'This is my beloved Son', 3<sup>rd</sup> at this wedding feast, 'He revealed his glory' rich in symbolism of a wedding feast. The first reading is from Isaiah, a hymn about the glory of Jerusalem, Jesus has come to lead us to an even more glorious heavenly Jerusalem. In the second reading Paul tells us how to use the gifts we receive from the Spirit.

The **First Reading** comes from the third part of Isaiah. The work, Isaiah 56-66, is a composite collection, its various parts dating from before the end of the Exile, 538 B.C., to the rebuilding of the Temple in 520 B.C. Taken as a whole this last part of the book of Isaiah seems to be the work of Second Isaiah's disciples composed sometime after the return from exile. It can be considered the final product of the Isaian tradition, active from the days of the great eighth century prophet himself.

The reading, 62.1-5, is a poem about the glory of Jerusalem. The poem has the theme of marriage and Jerusalem and the country in which it stands, Judah, is to become Yahweh's bride. The joyful names, 'My Delight, and 'The Wedded' conferred on Jerusalem and Judah are real names attested elsewhere in the Bible, (see the teaching of the prophet Hosea). This city wedded to the Lord will be for us the heavenly Jerusalem our homeland where we hope to be wedded to the Lord, and God will rejoice in us as the reading suggests. It is the teaching of Jesus, symbolised by the rich wine Jesus produces which will enable us to reach this heavenly Jerusalem.

The **Responsorial Psalm**, Psalm 18.8-10,15, celebrates Yahweh as creator of the heavens and the author of the Law, nature and the Law both manifest the perfection of God. In the ancient East the sun, the centre piece of the heavens, symbolised justice so nature and Law sit happily with each other in this psalm. The section we have is about the law of God and the first three verses speak in praise of God's Law, his decrees, his precepts, his commands and should lead to a respectful fear/awe of the Lord. Finally the psalm wishes that the words from our mouths, as opposed to the words from God's mouth, find favour with God our Saviour and rescuer from death.

The **Second Reading** is from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Paul evangelised the church at Corinth between A.D.50 and 52. His policy was to establish the Christian faith in a centre of population, and here he chose the great and populous port of Corinth, so that the faith could spread to the whole of the province of Achaia. The Christian community grew strong composed mainly of poor people, but Corinth was a centre of Greek life, philosophy and religions. It was also a notorious centre of immorality which was to cause problems for the newly converted. In 1Corinthians Paul addresses urgent problems that faced the church there and the decisions that had to be made to address these problems such as moral conduct, of marriage and virginity, of liturgical and Eucharistic meetings, of gifts of the Spirit, of matters concerning the Church and the world, appeals to civil courts, eating foods sacrificed to idols. Paul's religious genius enabled him to use all these problems as a vehicle to expound the profound doctrines of Christian liberty, the sanctification of the body, the supremacy of love, union with Christ. Paul teaches the Corinthians that there is only one master, Christ, and only one message, the cross, and there is only one true wisdom.

In today's reading, 12.4-11, Paul deals with the gifts of the Spirit. He opens the chapter by warning the Corinthians about the true nature of these gifts. They are meant for these early Christians to be visible evidence of the presence of the Spirit in their lives and the life of the Church, they are not meant to be used as a spectacular show in an undisciplined way in the life of the Church at Corinth, reminiscent of their pagan past. The gifts are given by the Spirit for the good of the community. Our reading now begins, the Spirit sent to the Church at Pentecost gives the Church a variety of gifts but they must all always be used to serve the same Lord. Paul then lists a variety of gifts granted through the Spirit. There is wisdom, the gift of preaching the deepest Christian truths; knowledge, the gift of preaching elementary Christians truths; the gift of a really intense faith; the gift of healing; the gift of working miracles; the gift of prophecy; the gift of distinguishing whether a gift is spiritual, natural or evil; the gift of tongues, praying under the influence of the Spirit in an unintelligible language; the gift of interpreting tongues. It is one and the same Spirit distributing these gifts at will to each individual. We must be aware that the Spirit is equally solicitous for the good of the Church today.