

Year C 2013
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
(Is 62:1-5; Ps 96; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Jn 2:1-11)

Isaiah is the prophet of the time of salvation, as even his name indicates (“Jesus” is just another form, in Hebrew, of a name meaning “Yahweh is salvation”). Salvation comes after Exile, as peace and forgiveness come after sin and repentance (or “penance”), and as estrangement and enmity are followed by return to family and reconciliation. The “prodigal son” goes back home and his Good Father lavishes him with love and a banquet feast. And there is no more hopeful and joyous occasion than a marriage feast, full of making merry and filled with the expectation of a new life as husband and wife and as procreators of even more new life. A marriage feast, with abundant wine and good feeling, is a special image in the Bible for the intimate, loving union that should reign between God and his people. Our two readings today, from Isaiah and from John’s Gospel, speak about this in a profound way.

In the first reading, Zion, Jerusalem, is still recovering from the horrific punishment she endured for her sins. In Is 40:2, it is calculated as “double” punishment. The Babylonians had come and besieged Jerusalem, the holy city. People had starved, mothers had eaten their beloved babies, as the curses for breaking the covenant had threatened, in Dt 28:53-57. And then they had been taken away into exile into a foreign land, again, like the prodigal son in Luke 15:13. But although it had seemed as if Yahweh had divorced his people, it had not come to that (Is 54:1-10). Israel had had to learn her lesson, but the reconciliation would be a completely new start, as only God can do. Israel’s shame will be over, she will be vindicated, and it will be like a marriage between a young man and his beautiful virgin, so shall the Lord rejoice over this union.

Jesus had this marriage joy in his mind and heart and lips. He used it to answer the question about why he and his disciples did not fast (Mk 2:18-22). It was a new time, a new beginning, he was bringing. Jesus would manifest God’s Glory, who God was, on the cross. This would take place in his “hour.” He would show that his Father loved the world enough to send his only Son into it. But now, at his Mother Mary’s prodding, Jesus begins to manifest who God is by providing abundant wine at a wedding. As Eve prodded Adam to sin, the New Eve prods Jesus to save, and at the cross the new Bride will come forth from the sleeping Jesus’ side.