

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalm 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

John 2:1-11

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In Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God has been turned loose in the world, changing our world forever. Imagine that you have never heard of electricity, and someone hands you an incandescent light bulb to examine. You might be pleased by its pear-like shape, and the smoothness of its surface. You might admire the neat way its metal stem is joined to the glass sphere. If you broke the bulb, you would be surprised to find a tangle of wires inside. You would be struck by the brittle sharpness of the shards in comparison to the smoothness of the intact bulb. You would see that the milky color of the bulb is caused by a white powder on the inside surface of the glass.

You might make all sorts of observations, and draw all kinds of conclusions about the light bulb, but you wouldn't understand it. You couldn't know its real *purpose* until someone screwed it into a socket and threw the switch. Only when you saw the bulb burning would it become evident why the bulb was made; what it was for.

Our world is a bit like that light bulb. People have made all sorts of observations about it, and drawn all kinds of conclusions, but we can't really understand the world until we've seen the Spirit of Christ burning in it. When we see the Spirit shining forth in the world, we gladly discard all our old conclusions about it, in favor of a new insight into what the world is *for*. It suddenly becomes clear that the world was *made* for *this*

purpose: to reveal God in Christ.

As long as electric current is flowing through our light bulb, it has to glow. Unless it is switched off, light has to pour out of it. So it is with Christ, except that the Spirit of Christ cannot be switched off. God's Spirit, once loosed in the world, has to produce light -- has to be manifested. The Light of the World cannot be hidden. When the wine runs out at Cana, Jesus' mother asks him to help. Jesus responds that the hour of his passion has not yet come. But Mary *knows* that he will perform a sign -- that the Spirit *will* be manifested in him. And so she instructs the waiters, "Do whatever he tells you."

The Spirit of Christ has been loosed in the world, and is the Light of the World. More than anything, we want to see that light. It is the source of our hope and our understanding. It is the only wisdom worth having. But, despite its importance, the presence of the Spirit in the world isn't evident to everyone. Not everyone at Cana appreciated the miraculous sign that Christ performed there. Apparently many went away unaware that anything remarkable had occurred.

Jesus didn't climb up on a table and announce, "Ladies and gentlemen I have here six jars of perfectly ordinary water which I am about to turn into wine of the finest quality." No, he acted in an unobtrusive way, to satisfy an ordinary human need. As far as we can tell, the only people who noticed that Jesus had performed a miraculous sign were his disciples, and the waiters who had drawn the water.

So if we want to see the transforming presence of the Spirit of Christ in the world around us, we should imitate the waiters at Cana. If, like them, we give our lives over to the service of others, and obey Mary's command to "Do whatever he tells you," we will see the works and gifts

of the Spirit manifested in our lives and in our world.