



Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 2:1-12. (R1) Is. 62:1-5. (R2) 1 Cor. 12:4-11.

Jesus began His public life with a banquet and ended it with a banquet. In both banquets wine played a major part.

The first banquet was at Cana, four miles northeast of Nazareth. John viewed this miracle as a first sign of the divinization of man. Present at it was the woman, foretold in Genesis (3:15). According to John, the miracle took place "on the third day" — a clue to interpret it in the light of the resurrection. Thus the hour theme was also brought in. Whenever Jesus spoke of "His hour," He referred to His passion. His passion was the hour when His power was, so to speak, shackled. Herod branded Him a fool because He would work no miracle. Jewish leaders taunted, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." His hour was the night come when no man can work" (Jn. 9:4). Therefore Jesus' remark to Mary, what to me and to you could mean, "So you want me to get involved in this problem of yours, do you? (said no doubt with a smile.) All right, I shall, for my hour has not yet come — the hour when my miraculous powers will be circumscribed. I can still work my works." Mary so understood and instructed those waiting on table, "Do whatever he tells you."

Lastly there was the wine! Wedding feasts usually lasted from three days to a week. In Aramaic they were called drink-festivals. Hence a wine lack would have been catastrophic. "Where there is no wine," went a rabbinical saying, "there is no joy."

In the ancient world wine was an essential part of the economy. Depending as it does on the rhythm of the seasons and man's careful, ingenious labor, wine came to have a religious significance. At the presentation of the wine at Mass, the priest alludes to this in the words "fruit of the vine (God's gift) and work of human hands" to remind us that salvation is the work of both God and man.

As Jesus was about to celebrate the banquet at the end of His life, He said, "I am the real vine" (Jn. 15:1) — not a false one, like fruitless Israel, His chosen vineyard. By shedding His blood for all men, He produced the wine of universal love. Thus the old wineskins of Judaic exclusivism and privilege could not hold the new wine.

We are the branches. Grapes grow from the branches and wine is squeezed from the grapes. To enable us to produce the wine of universal love, wine is taken at Mass and becomes the blood of Christ so that His love can get into our blood!

One of the great old time entertainers was Ted Lewis.

He used to sashay onto the stage with a stove-pipe hat, a silver-knobbed cane, do a little soft-shoe, get everybody laughing and then ask, "Is everybody happy?" Christ came to make everybody happy — to spread joy. He certainly could not have shown this better than by a wedding gift of over 150 gallons, or 800 bottles, of wine!

I often wondered what would have happened had Jesus not been at Cana. I bet there would have been a regular donnybrook. The groom would have blamed his bride for the wine shortage, and the bride her groom. The parents of one would have impugned the parents of the other. In any event it would have been a sorry beginning harbingering a sorer ending! But the problem never materialized because Jesus was there!

Marriages today will continue to flounder and fracture until we learn that Jesus must be invited — must be the third party in every marriage. "On the third day there was a wedding at Cana. Jesus had been invited" — and that invitation made all the difference!

BBB Gives Warning on Solicitation

The Rochester Better Business Bureau last week issued a report following complaints by area businessmen about telephone solicitations made by persons identifying themselves as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

The BBB says a sales office manned by people identifying themselves as CORE representatives conducts long distance WATS-line telephone solicitations to raise funds and sell advertising in a magazine but the business firms so contacted complain about the intimidating sales tactics used by the solicitors.

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Insights into Liturgy

What Is Ordinary Time?

BY FATHER ROBERT J. KENNEDY

I would be willing to bet a stick of hyssop that in some parish church this Sunday some lector will ask, "How come it's the Second Sunday of the Year when it's really the third Sunday of the year?" It is not because the Church is behind the times. Rather, the Church begins that part of the liturgical year which is outside the "strong seasons" of Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter. It is the season of "Ordinary Time", a period that covers almost two thirds of the year.

Without trying to downplay the importance of the Church's major feasts and seasons, the value of this Ordinary Time should not be underestimated. It allows a more "leisurely" celebration of the mystery of Christ in all its fullness, since, like the major season, it has its own plan and purpose.

The season of Ordinary Time is a system of 34 Sundays, the first few of which run from the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

until Lent and the remaining ones on the Sundays after Pentecost until the Feast of Christ the King.

The readings for these "ordinary" Sundays are in a three-year cycle and are constructed in relationship to the Gospel readings. In Year A, we read Matthew; in Year B, Mark; and in Year C (the current cycle), we read Luke. These Gospels are read on a semicontinuous basis, that is, during Ordinary Time, the whole Gospel is read pretty much straight through, with the exception of those passages that are directly related to a particular season. The Old Testament reading is chosen for its relationship to the Gospel and the Responsorial Psalm is a meditation on this first reading. In Ordinary Time, the second reading is generally independent of these other two selections. In this way, the Old Testament and Gospel readings provide one main theme for celebration, the New Testament reading an auxiliary theme reflecting the way the early Church understood the living of the Gospel of Christ.

Ordinary Time is deliberately low-key, allowing congregations to focus on now this dimension, now that, of the teaching and ministry of Christ. This variety of passages is set against the background of Sunday, the original and central Christian feast day. Sunday is the Lord's Day, the day of the Resurrection, and, in Ordinary Time, it is the key feast of the Week. Thus, the Sundays of Ordinary Time portray the words and work of Christ against the fuller backdrop of his saving death and resurrection, allowing their rich meaning to be intensified.

study of the texts from the Lectionary and Sacramentary, adequate preparation of themes based on the readings and the wise selection of the variety of options offered by the Order of Mass, parishes will have good celebrations that will nourish and foster faith. They will use the ordinary season to grow in extraordinary ways in their knowledge and love of God, and thus will give Him greater glory as they go forth to serve others.

The season of Ordinary Time presents a challenge to parish liturgy committees. Committees often spend vast amounts of time on the "stronger" feasts and seasons which, in many ways, run themselves. This forces a committee and their congregations to bypass some of the rich treasures that might be brought forth in Ordinary Time.

With careful prayer and

Kelly Named to Seminary Post

Joseph G. Kelly, a teacher at St. Bernard's Seminary since 1970, will become director of the continuing education department on July 1.

Announcing the appointment last week, Father Joseph G. Brennan, retiring rector, spoke of "the new vitality that has come to the department." He described continuing education as "an integral part" of the seminary and sketched plans made in the light of Bishop Joseph L. Hogan's pastoral letter, You Are Living Stones.

Guided by an advisory committee, the department will offer both credit and non-credit courses and "a wide variety of workshops and experiences" for professional church leaders, religious and lay.

Mr. Kelly has been administrative assistant to the rector since 1973, and since 1970, associate professor of Old Testament. He also has been a special lecturer at the University of Rochester. He has a BA degree from the seminary and an MA in theology from the University of Notre-Dame.

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