**2nd Sunday on Ordinary Time, Cycle C**

Isaiah 62: 1-5; 1 Cor. 12: 4-11; John 2: 1-11

January 19/20, 2019

I recently married my niece. Officiating at the Sacrament of Matrimony is always a joy for me. She and her fiancé chose for the Gospel reading the account of the wedding feast at Cana, which we just heard.

Jesus chose to reveal himself as the divine Son of God at a wedding feast in Cana and how God provides what is needed — in this case, lots of good wine which is a symbol of grace— to ensure that the love of marriage may be enjoyed and shared with the whole community who gather to celebrate. Even in our first reading, Isaiah describes God as a young man who is like a bridegroom rejoicing in his new bride and he refers to marriage as an image of God’s love for us.

Thinking about marriage and the world, I am left with the question, “What will ultimately unite our marriages, our parishes, communities, and our world today?”

I believe it will be love. Only God’s love will ultimately unite us. God is love. Nothing and no one else, I think, will long unite us and bring peace to our marriages, families, and world. We often try to use the world’s strategy to bring unity and peace, and it doesn’t work for long. The strategy of the world is ***utility, or usefulness*** ***to each other***. We tend to think that as long as we are useful and suitable for someone’s’ needs or desires, we will have peace and unity. We do this in our marriages, with our employers, with our neighbors, and with others. But the ***unity of utility is very fragile*** and the cause of many divisions, conflicts and divorces in our world today.

No, only true love will unite us, nothing else in the long run, for ***love is the mentality of Jesus. Love is the presence of God in our lives.*** Love is indeed divine. Without love, only usefulness, or the lack thereof, remains. Without love, conflict, darkness, and sin quickly take over.

We must not forget, though, that true love for others — whether in marriage and family or in our communities — requires **faith and fidelity**: faith in each other, faith in God***. Faith and fidelity are the*** ***keys that unlock the door of love.*** Faith that is shared with others enables love to endure even in the most difficult of times. A shared faith, mutual fidelity, sustains our marriages, our families, or communities. That is why married couples need to give each other gift of faith. They must keep faith in each other. The same is true with our parishes. That is one reason why as a parish community we must gather every week to worship together and to share our faith with each other.

Faith, given to each other, enables us to see the love that is present in our relationships. ***Faith illuminates the presence of God who is love.*** It sheds a bright light on the presence of God in our marriages and families and parishes. Faith allows us to see God’s presence and action in our lives. Oh, how much we need to increase our faith in each other because the world so desperately needs to see genuine love.

Do we realize, brothers and sisters in Christ, that the love we have for our husbands and wives, for our children and grandchildren, for our parish and community, if it is to endure, requires faith and fidelity? Do we see how love within marriage between a man and a woman raises marriage up to such a dignity in God’s eyes that it becomes a sacrament, which means God reveals himself and gives abundant grace through the love of marriage? Mutual love, grounded in faith and fidelity, becomes the way God reveals loves his people. This is what happened at the wedding feast of Cana; he revealed himself and his love through a marriage celebration, and gave abundant, overflowing grace to all the people. Jesus does the same each time a couple enters into a sacramental marriage. Jesus does the same in this parish when we gather with a shared faith, by giving us abundant grace in the Eucharist.

Only love will long unite us, not mere usefulness to each other, not simply meeting each others’ needs. We must come to Eucharist, not simply to get our needs met or to meet the needs of others, but rather to express our faith with each other so that we may see the love of God among us and especially in the Eucharist. To come to only get our needs met or to meet someone else’s needs would be the mentality of the world. The mentality of Christ is of love and fidelity. Faith in each other and in God allows love to endure.

If we remain faithful to each other our love will be pure and maintain its integrity and it will become a bright light shining in our world today, a world desperately needing to see the real meaning of love.

Yes, God love us as a bridegroom loves his new bride. Jesus revealed himself as the Son of God at a wedding. God abundantly blesses the love we have for one another, as husbands and wives, as neighbors and friends, as fellow parishioners. Our love must endure. It will if we maintain faith and fidelity to each other and to God. Our love, grounded in faith, will become a bright light that reveals to the whole world the love of God for his people.