

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

After our solemn season of Christmas, today we return to Ordinary Time. I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude and thanks to all our parish community who supported us in any way during our Christmas celebrations. The many hours of preparing and enhancing our environment, practicing liturgical music, as well as the volunteer service of so many people made this Holy Season both beautiful and memorable. I am also edified by the very generous financial giving we experienced during the Christmas masses in addition to gifts given during the Christmas season. Your generosity is truly remarkable, and I believe such is a reflection of our thanksgiving and gratitude to Almighty God for the vibrancy and support of our parish community.

Today's reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthians reflects what we already know as I described in the previous paragraph. The Lord endows each of us with unique gifts and talents. When these qualities are used in the service of others and in concert with others, together we build up the Kingdom of God and become an authentic Christian community. "But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes." Sometimes, in our human nature, it is easy to be envious or jealous of another person's gifts and talents. To do this is to deny the very gifts that God has given to us. Spiritually, we can overcome these temptations by praying in thanksgiving to God for the talents He has given to us and to reflect upon and discern how those unique gifts can be used in the service of others. In a particular way in the Church, God has given us ministries which call us to a deeper faithfulness in how we live the sacraments and celebrate the liturgical life together. It is important to remember that it is God who calls us to our state in life, be it marriage, the single state, religious and consecrated life, the permanent diaconate and ministerial priesthood. Our Christian and Catholic faith calls us to a spirit of mutual support as we engage in these very important parts of the Church.

The Wedding Feast of Cana told today in John's Gospel presents us with some very powerful images of how God's plan of salvation is operative through Jesus and Mary. Mary is a cooperator with her Son in his earthly mission and thus she is there with him as he performs his first miracle. We see Mary in her role as intercessor for humankind, in their time of need, to her Son. Jesus tells his mother with great respect that his hour has not yet come. What is Mary's response to the servants? "Do whatever he tells you." This opens the avenue for the miracle taking place. It is significant that Jesus orders the waiters to fill large jars with water. They do so and fill them to the brim. This is symbolic of how God's grace overflows and is abundant. We see in the other miracles when food is multiplied that it overflows and there are always leftovers. Such is God's grace and mercy. The wedding feast, which unites people in love and is a source of great hospitality and joy, is a foretaste of the feast the Lord has prepared for us in the gift of eternal life.

Fr. Tom