

Fr Brendan Seery Homily 2nd Sunday Ordinary Time Year C 2nd January 2022

For the first Sunday in over seven weeks - green is being worn by the priest to represent the return in the Church's year to 'ordinary time'. We've returned to that period in time which falls between Christmas and Easter that's not quite Lent or not quite Advent and so can be considered pretty ordinary - not so special - that run of the mill time in between those great seasons in the Church's year. But that is to completely misunderstand what is meant by the term 'ordinary time'. In Latin *tempus ordinalis* from which we get the term 'ordinary time' refers to time measured in ordinal numbers, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. So this time isn't 'ordinary' in the sense that we might understand it. In fact no time is ordinary! Every moment we have is a gift from God – it is the most precious thing we can give to God or to others since it is something that we only have once.

Continuing with the theme of the preciousness of time - there are great philosophers who have suggested that if we want to know a person's priorities or values - we just have to look at what they spend their time doing. From my few years in the St Barnabas Cluster so far - working with our young people - visiting the sick alongside parishioners - helping to facilitate the RCIA - Communion and Confirmation courses as well as a number of other church activities - I can see that our parishes value three main things; God - family and community. And I would like to take this opportunity to say that I am extremely proud to be part of what our parishes clearly values in our mission to bring Christ to others across Milton Keynes.

In the Gospel today - we hear how Jesus spent his time with a couple at their wedding. This expresses the importance of celebrating great communal events such as marriage by feasting and partying and having a good time. By spending time celebrating - Jesus is clearly showing us that there are occasions that we should celebrate and to do so is a good way to spend the precious time that is given to us from God.

From the Gospel, we can also see how Jesus transforms what seems - at first glance, ordinary – water – into something special and wonderful and by so doing - gives us a prefiguring of the Eucharist. By doing this - Jesus is showing us that nothing given to us from God is ordinary. Even water - which many of us would take for granted is something that gives life to us all. Jesus raises what we would consider ordinary to the realm of the divine and that is what we should attempt to do with every moment of time that we are given.

This transformation of something seemingly ordinary into something special and wonderful happens as a result of the divine actions of Christ - but a sometimes overlooked aspect of the Gospel story is that Christ acts as a result of the intercession of Mary. Our Lady asks Christ to act on behalf of the couple and in so doing gives us an example of her intercessory ability for us. The very last words she directly speaks, as recorded in the Gospel of John, are - 'do whatever he tells you...' These words are words we should take to heart since in doing what God asks of us in our daily lives - we can raise up those seemingly ordinary moments of time to the realm of the divine.

True Marian devotion as we have heard from the Gospel - always, without fail - points to Jesus! Even the great Marian prayer - the Hail Mary which we pray at every Mass - speaks of two moments of time – in fact the most important moments of time - 'now and the hour of our death.' They are important since we should live the now for Christ so that at the hour of our death - we might be with him for eternity.

So - let us pray together this week - that every single moment that God gives us - we use to bring about his glory and the coming of His Kingdom and so ensure that even "ordinary time" is far from ordinary - but preparation for the divine.