

Daily Readings and Reflections

Month of Mini-Retreats

Week 2

The Wedding at Cana

Note: For clarity, “oracle of the LORD” may be read as “says the LORD.”

Sunday, July 8

Reading

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” [And] Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him. John 2:1-11

Reflection

Jesus is revealing so much to us through his first miracle! Today we focus on how Jesus reveals himself as the long awaited Bridegroom Messiah. As faithful Jews, the disciples were very aware of how the prophets repeatedly described the Chosen One of God as the Bridegroom and the people of God as the Bride. Now, they are in the midst of a wedding celebration and Jesus performs his first miracle! It was not just the act of performing a miracle that revealed Jesus’ glory to them but also the setting and the type of miracle. The significance of the water in the ceremonial washing jars being changed into wine was surely not lost on the disciples. All of these things helped the disciples begin to understand that Jesus was not simply another prophet. He was the One for whom their people had been waiting.

Meditation

- Do I ever feel like I am waiting for God to reveal himself to me?
- How does my knowledge about God help me to recognize him in the many ways he reveals himself to me?

Monday, July 9

Reading

Do not fear, you shall not be put to shame;
do not be discouraged, you shall not be disgraced.
For the shame of your youth you shall forget,
the reproach of your widowhood no longer remember.
For your husband is your Maker;

the LORD of hosts is his name,
Your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel,
called God of all the earth.

The LORD calls you back,
like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,
A wife married in youth and then cast off,
says your God.
For a brief moment I abandoned you,
but with great tenderness I will take you back.
In an outburst of wrath, for a moment
I hid my face from you;
But with enduring love I take pity on you,
says the LORD, your redeemer.
Isaiah 54: 4-8

Reflection

At the time Jesus was born, Israel was not only under the rule of the Roman Empire but also in the midst of a prophetic lull. For almost 400 years God's communication with his people through public prophecy was sparse. The people of Israel must have felt like God had indeed turned his face from them. But there was also hope in his enduring love. Hope in the promise of redemption. Hope that he would take them back like a loving husband forgives and takes back an unfaithful wife. Imagine how seeing Jesus perform his first miracle must have reignited the disciples hope in God. He was finally calling them back to himself!

Meditation

- Do I find my hope in God's promises even when I feel that I am having to wait on him to fulfill them?
- Have I ever felt like God was far from me? Was there a particular experience during that time the revealed God working in my life? How did that experience give me hope for the future?

Tuesday, July 10

Reading

On that day—oracle of the LORD—
You shall call me “My husband,”
and you shall never again call me “My baal.”
I will remove from her mouth the names of the Baals;
they shall no longer be mentioned by their name.
I will make a covenant for them on that day,
with the wild animals,
With the birds of the air,
and with the things that crawl on the ground.
Bow and sword and warfare
I will destroy from the land,
and I will give them rest in safety.

I will betroth you to me forever:
I will betroth you to me with justice and with judgment,
with loyalty and with compassion;
I will betroth you to me with fidelity,

and you shall know the LORD.

On that day I will respond—oracle of the LORD—
I will respond to the heavens,
and they will respond to the earth;
The earth will respond to the grain, and wine, and oil,
and these will respond to Jezreel.

I will sow her for myself in the land,
and I will have pity on Not-Pitied.
I will say to Not-My-People, “You are my people,”
and he will say, “My God!”
Hosea 2:18-25

Reflection

Why does God inspire his prophets to repeatedly foretell the New Covenant in terms of marriage? Because through the Messiah he is seeking not only to restore what was lost by Adam’s sin in Eden, but to establish something far superior. God frequently visited Adam and Eve in the garden, but they were not in God’s presence all of the time. However, through Jesus’ perfect and perpetual sacrifice, God is establishing a covenant in which his people will be made one with him and reside in his presence for all eternity...we will be betrothed to him forever. Thus, the headwaiter’s statement at the wedding in Cana, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now,” was not recorded because Jesus makes excellent wine. The significance is that the New Covenant will be superior to the Old Covenant that came first. Even though it is one of the great mysteries of our faith, we see that God seeks a relationship with us that can only be described in human terms by the intimacy and imagery of marriage. He wants his people to know that his love for them is eternal and that no matter how far they have strayed from him he has provided the Redeemer who can bring them back.

Meditation

- In what ways can I let down my guard and allow God to enter into my life in a more personal and intimate way?
- How have I seen God’s compassion and fidelity in my life?

Wednesday, July 11

Reading

See, days are coming—oracle of the LORD—when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. They broke my covenant, though I was their master—oracle of the LORD. But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days—oracle of the LORD. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. They will no longer teach their friends and relatives, “Know the LORD!” Everyone, from least to greatest, shall know me—oracle of the LORD—for I will forgive their iniquity and no longer remember their sin.
Jeremiah 31:31-34

Reflection

Through Jeremiah, God explains a key difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. In the Old Covenant the people of God knew his laws but broke them. In the New Covenant the laws of God are placed upon our hearts. The Old Covenant was a covenant of knowledge and flesh as between a master and a servant. The New Covenant is a covenant of heart and spirit as between a husband and wife. In the New Covenant we no longer obey God simply because he is our master. We now obey out of our love for the merciful Bridegroom who sacrifices himself so that our iniquities may be forgiven and our sins forgotten.

Meditation

- Do I ever lose sight of why I am obeying God's laws and Church doctrines?
- How can I infuse my love for God into each act of obedience to him?

Thursday, July 12

Reading

Turn away your face from my sins;
blot out all my iniquities.
A clean heart create for me, God;
renew within me a steadfast spirit.
Do not drive me from before your face,
nor take from me your holy spirit.
Restore to me the gladness of your salvation;
uphold me with a willing spirit.
I will teach the wicked your ways,
that sinners may return to you.
Rescue me from violent bloodshed, God, my saving God,
and my tongue will sing joyfully of your justice.
Lord, you will open my lips;
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.
For you do not desire sacrifice or I would give it;
a burnt offering you would not accept.
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a contrite, humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn.
Psalm 51:11-19

Reflection

David was chosen by God to be king of Israel because he was "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). He was also a sinful man. Many times our hearts are not revealed so much in how little we sin but in how we act after having sinned. This is the case with David. Psalm 51 was written by David after God sent the prophet Nathan to confront him about his sin. We see that David was not distraught because he had been caught. He was grieved because his sin had created distance between him and God. He also understood that God does not desire sacrifices of goats and bulls, but God desires the hearts of his people. Just as infidelity creates distance between husband and wife, so sin creates distance between us and God. God does not abandon us, though. God does not drive us from before his face or take from us his Holy Spirit. If we are willing, he will take the sacrifice of our hearts and create in us clean hearts. He will create in us hearts after his own heart. This exchange of hearts is what is at the center of a loving marriage, and it is what God desires in his relationship with us.

Meditation

- What sins am I allowing to create distance between me and God?
- How can I offer God the sacrifice of my heart each day?
- In what ways have I experienced God creating in me a clean heart through my relationship with him?

Friday, July 13

Reading

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:38

Reflection

Today let's turn our attention to Mary, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. In her Immaculate Conception, God created in her a clean heart by preserving her from original sin. In her complete willingness to submit herself to God's will, she perfectly and completely gives her heart over to his divine will as her sacrifice. The Catechism tells us that she espoused "the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly, without a single sin to restrain her, she gave herself entirely to the person and to the work of her Son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with him and dependent on him, by God's grace." (CCC 494) Thus, she perfectly shows us how to live as a bride betrothed to God.

Meditation

- As God continues to create in me a clean heart, how can I give myself more fully to him?
- How can I use Mary's example to help me wholeheartedly espouse myself to God's will for my life?

Saturday, July 14

Reading

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

John 1: 31-33

Reflection

Not only does Mary show us how to perfectly live our spousal relationship with God, she also wants to help us grow deeper in that relationship. She helps us to have the same kind of loving, intimate relationship that she has with God. Just as she brought Jesus into the world, if we allow it, she will bring Jesus into our hearts. And just as she brought the servants to Jesus, she will take our hearts to Jesus. Just as she noticed the needs of the couple at the wedding in Cana, she also notices our needs. We only need to open ourselves to her assistance, and she will take us to the One who can truly help us. Through her we can be drawn more deeply into the exchange of hearts that God desires in our lives.

Meditation

- Am I open to Mary's help in drawing near to Jesus in my daily life?
- In my times of need, do I allow Mary to take me to Jesus?
- When she says, "Do whatever he tells you," do I listen to her?