



Homiletic Guide - Bring On the Wine!

January 19, 2025 - The Second Sunday of Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5 - You shall be called “My Delight is in her,” and your land “Espoused.”

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 95 - Let us sing joyfully to the Lord.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 - There are many gifts, but the same Spirit.

Gospel: John 2:1-11 - The wedding at Cana.

The following notes are provided as a leadoff for your reflection—it is not necessary to address every bullet point in your homily. With that in mind, here are some thoughts to ponder:

- **The covenant between God and Israel, as well as the New Covenant in our Lord Jesus Christ, are described in Scripture using the language of the marriage covenant.**
 - Marriage as a phenomenon of human culture is universal, predating both Christianity and Judaism. It has always and everywhere been held in high regard as a fundamental good for human beings.
 - Nevertheless, it took centuries for the full understanding of marriage to be revealed within Judaism, with the final touches given by Jesus himself:
 - God created man and woman for each other, “and the two of them become one body.” (Gn 2:18-24) Marriage is the “one flesh” union of a man and a woman.
 - The Covenant with Abraham was made by mutual consent: “I will maintain my covenant... to be your God and the God of your descendants after you” (Gn 17:7). *Marriage is the bond of a man and a woman who freely give and accept each other as a covenant.* (Canon 1057, §2)



- The Law of Moses rejects adultery (Ex 20:14), establishing that marriage is designed to shelter children in a family with both of their biological parents. *Marriage is faithful, just as God is faithful.* See also Hosea 3:1.
- **In today's first reading**, *marriage is a privileged symbol of the Covenant with God (Is 62:4-5)*, meaning that each covenant illuminates the other.
- Jesus asserts that the covenant bond of marriage is irrevocable, except in the case of unlawful marriages: "What God has joined together, no human being must separate." (Mt 19:6) *Marriage is indissoluble.*
- Although the Old Testament does not outlaw polygamy, the practice was disastrous. By the time of the return from Babylon, it had ceased to be a common practice, and Rabbinic Judaism eventually condemned it. Jesus rejected it when he said that even looking at another woman lustfully is adulterous (Mt 5:27-28). See also 1 Cor 7:2. *Marriage is monogamous.*
- As mentioned last month, *Christian marriage is ordered toward new life by raising children and caring for others in need. Marriage is fruitful.*
- *Baptism and the Eucharist establish the New Covenant between Christ and the People of God. This New Covenant is faithful, indissoluble, established by mutual consent in Baptism, joins us with the Lord through a bodily union in the Eucharist, and imparts new life in the Holy Spirit. The parallels to Christian marriage are clear: see Lk 22:14-20, Eph 5:31-32, and Rev 19:7-9.*





- **Pope Francis recently gave a general audience (October 23, 2024) on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Marriage. It fits nicely with today’s second reading from 1 Corinthians and provides a valuable resource for homilists this weekend.**
 - The Trinity of three persons in one God, united in a mutual self-giving, parallels the “two become one” union of a man and woman in marriage.
 - The gifts of the Spirit made available to couples through the Sacrament are directed to strengthening the union and the capacity for self-giving of the couple.
 - Grace builds on nature, so it remains necessary for couples to work on their skills: communication, conflict resolution, loving service, spending quality time, etc.
 - Seeking the help of the Holy Spirit is vital for every marriage. Without the Spirit, it is like building the marriage on shifting sand, and children pay the greatest price.
- **Many young Catholics today are putting off marriage for fear of “running out of wine.”**
 - They are overwhelmed by the financial costs of a church wedding, or they worry about marrying the “wrong person” who will not be right for them in the long run.
 - Yet at a purely social level, the benefits of marriage are immense—for personal mental and physical health, the well-being of the couple, financial security, and the good of the children. The CA Bishops’ recent letter introducing the Radiate Love initiative cites some prominent studies that demonstrate this.
 - For Christians, marriage is not the promise of a perfect life in blissful harmony, but rather a step toward growth in faith, hope, and love, walking together in the footsteps of Christ. We choose to take marriage vows, trusting in the Lord to provide what we as individuals may lack for the journey ahead.





- **Others settle for a civil marriage, forging the sacramental grace the Lord wants to share with us—a grace that is vitally needed to attain the “abundant life” He promises.**
 - God chose a wedding as the setting to launch the ministry of his only begotten Son for a reason—for most of us, a good marriage is the key to live our best life.
 - By turning the water into the *best wine* when the wine brought by the couple had run out, he demonstrates that in the Sacrament of Marriage, God wants to give couples abundantly more joy and life than they might find from their own efforts.
 - This sacramental grace is very real and even measurable by social science: the General Social Surveys conducted over the last 50 years show that among Christians in the U.S., Catholics have always had, and still have today, by far the lowest divorce rate—especially when they frequently go to Mass.
 - Who doesn’t want more from their marriage? Our God loves us more than we can ever comprehend, and that love finds a home in our hearts in the Sacrament of Marriage, giving us the “best wine” of divine grace to live an “abundant life” (Jn 10:10). In the words of this month’s Radiate Love bulletin reflection: Bring it on!

- The ***Radiate Love Marriage Initiative***
 - The Catholic Church throughout California is progressing along the year-long *Radiate Love* initiative to deepen our appreciation for the gift of Marriage.
 - Highlight any activities that the parish will be sponsoring in the coming months. **Emphasize that *all* are invited to explore the monthly resources on the website**, especially those for marriage enrichment or designed for faith sharing at home.





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Note for homilists: This Homiletic Guide is intended to help you encourage your people to invest in their marital relationship, share the faith with their children, and open their hearts to recognize the ways the Lord is leading them to radiate love out to the world, especially through the witness of a sacramental marriage that radiates the covenant love God has for His people. The Marriage Fact Sheet 2024 offers some important background information for your review, but not necessarily to include in your homily. The social trends regarding marriage in California are not great right now, but it is important to be positive, practical, and personal.

This Homiletic Guide is one resource among many others designed for your parish ministries or your parishioners' home use. You may want to take some time to familiarize yourself with the resources for January (bulletin insert or announcement, prayer card, blessing, intercessions, videos, etc.) on the *Radiate Love* website: www.radiatelove.info. In particular, be sure to make use of the Intercessory Prayers and the Blessing after Communion for Grandparents at all weekend Masses.