



Contributed by Fr. James M. Donohue, C.R.

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SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—YEAR C
January 16, 2022

GATHERING TIME (10-15 Minutes)

Introduction to the Word:

Our gospel started me thinking about "transformation." I began to reflect upon "transformative" experiences in my life. In this regard, I thought of more "religious" moments of transformation, such as being on a retreat, participating in novitiate and seminary life, and serving in ministry. But I also began to think about some less "religious" moments that came about through encounters and friendships, failures and successes, and travel abroad. One great influence that helped to "transform" me is Stephen Covey's book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. I have to admit that I had seen this book in the bookstore many times before I ever paid serious attention to it. What changed things for me was when I decided to take a two-week seminar on how to use Covey's *7 Habits* in ministry, and this decision proved to be transformative.

Covey develops 3 habits that have to do with one's personal life and 3 habits that have to do with one's interpersonal life. Although all the habits are "works in progress," focus on the first 3 habits will enable us to live the second 3 habits more effectively. I guess this is captured in the saying that "you cannot give what you do not have." (By the way, the 7th habit focuses on ways of renewal and regenerating the good progress that one has discovered in the first 6 habits.) Habit 1 is Be Proactive. This habit encourages us to *respond* from within deep principles of our lives instead of *reacting* to stimuli. I can decide to respond to hate with love, rather than to react to hate with hate. Habit 2 is Begin with the End in Mind. This habit encourages us to use our imagination to develop a vision of who and what we want to become and use our conscience to decide what values will guide us. Habit 3 is Put First Things First. This habit encourages us to develop the discipline to prioritize our day-to-day actions based on what is most important, not what is most urgent.

Shifting to interpersonal habits, Habit 4 is Think Win-Win. In order to establish effective interdependent relationships, we must commit to creating Win-Win situations that are mutually beneficial and satisfying to each party. Habit 5 is Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood. This habit reminds us that before we can offer advice, suggest solutions, or effectively interact with another person in any way, we must seek to deeply understand them and their perspective through empathic listening. Habit 6 is Synergize. By understanding and valuing the differences in another person's perspective, we have the opportunity to create synergy, which allows us to uncover new possibilities through openness and creativity. Living these habits has helped to transform how I think and how I act. It is one tool among many that has been helpful for me. What is most important is that we continue to be open to change that will make us better people so that our interactions with others are better as well. Or, in other words, being open to being transformed, so that I can participate in the transformation of others.

Warm-up Activity *(about 8-10 minutes)*

Can you identify some program, resource, course or seminar that has helped you to change for the better? What changes were you able to see in yourself? What effect did these changes have in your relationships with others?

- 1) Can you identify a person or persons who helped you to change for the better? What did you see and learn from these encounters and what personal transformation did you see in yourself? What effect did these changes have in your relationships with others?
- 2) In either case, did you find these transformations to be temporary or more permanent? Why do you think this is?

Table of the Word

When we pray the Eucharistic Prayer, we pray not only that the gifts of bread and wine will be transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, but that we also will be transformed into the Body of Christ. Eucharistic Prayer II prays that “partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.” Eucharistic Prayer III prays that “we who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ.” Eucharistic Prayer IV prays that we “may become a living sacrifice in Christ to the praise of your glory.” The Eucharistic Prayers for Various Needs are even more explicit about the transformation for which we pray. EP for Various Needs III, for instance, prays “that all the faithful of the Church, looking into the signs of the times by the light of faith, may constantly devote themselves to the service of the Gospel.” Further, it prays that we will keep “attentive to the needs of all that, sharing their grief and pain, their joy and hope, we may faithfully bring them the good news of salvation and go forward with them along the way of your Kingdom.” For its part, EP for Various Needs IV asks God to “open our eyes to the needs of our brothers and sisters; inspire in us words and actions to comfort those who labor and are burdened. Make us serve them truly, after the example of Christ and at his command. And may your Church stand as a living witness to truth and freedom, to peace and justice, that all people may be raised up to a new hope.” All of these prayers have the goal of our transformation into Christ, and having been conformed more closely to Him, making a difference in our world.

Penitential Rite:

Leader: Let us turn to our faithful and loving God in prayer:
Lord, Jesus, help us to say ‘Yes’ to your holy will,
Christ, Jesus, be with us as we try to fulfil your will,
Lord, Jesus, may our lives reflect our obedience and faithfulness,

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

Let us pray

*Almighty ever-living God, who governs
all things, both in heaven and on earth,
mercifully hear the pleading of your people and bestow your peace on our times.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.
Amen.*

Scripture Reflection Time (45 minutes)

*(As Christians we believe that the **WORD** of God we hear proclaimed each Sunday is an empowering Word, and that God is present in the Word proclaimed. This is the Word that God wants us to hear today. The dynamic of the Small Christian Community, namely, reflecting on our life story within the context of this Word, and sharing the insights of these reflections, is such that God’s Spirit becomes present, and the gifts of the Spirit are experienced as empowering and life giving.)*

FIRST READING (Isaiah 62:1-5)

For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight is in Her and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

Brothers and sisters: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another, the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (John 2:1-12)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

On the third day there was a wedding at Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for Jewish rites of purification, each holding about a hundred liters. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in Him. After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

COMMENTARY:

First Reading: The context for the First Reading is the Babylonian Exile. Israel was defeated by the Babylonians in 598/7 and 587/6 BCE. The captivity formally ended in 538 BCE, when the Persian conqueror of Babylon, King Cyrus, gave the Jews permission to return to their ancestral homeland. It was a difficult time for Israel, as it seemed as though God had deserted them and had not kept the covenant that God had made with David and his ancestors. Over time, however, Israel reflected upon its captivity in Babylon and came to realize that God had kept God's part of the covenant, but that Israel had not kept its part! Israel started to think about its time in captivity in Babylon as similar to the desert experience of Israel after the Exodus. The voices of prophets, such as Isaiah, gave people hope that while it seemed that they were "Forsaken" and left "Desolate," God was indeed faithful to them—even in their rebellion and infidelities—and was enabling their return to Jerusalem as a bridegroom welcomes his bride. Israel had always remained as God's "Delight." Thus, this time in captivity, together with prophetic voices of hope, became an opportunity for Israel to re-commit itself to be God's people.

Second Reading: Perhaps Paul's first letter to the Corinthians serves as a prism for our own transformation, providing us with the "new" and "life-giving" wine of the gospel. In service to others, through the gifts of the Spirit each of us has been given, we participate in manifesting the greatest gift of all—love. In doing so, we image the love of God, who so loved the world that he gave up his only Son (John 3:16), and the example of Mary, who in turning all things over to Jesus, receives the new life of discipleship.

Gospel Reading: The references to time in this passage in John's Gospel bring to mind allusions to the Genesis account of creation. John's Gospel begins with echoes of the words of the Book of Genesis: "In the beginning...." This suggests from the outset that John is talking about the new creation that will be inaugurated with the coming of the Messiah, the Lamb of God. From the

beginning of the Gospel, John has begun each section with the phrase “on the next day.” The chronology goes like this: 1st day—testimony of John the Baptist; 2nd day—John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God; 3rd day—Jesus calls Andrew and John; 4th day—Jesus calls Philip and Nathaniel. Notice that the next passage about the wedding at Cana begins with the words “on the third day.” So, we are now on the seventh day. This is the pinnacle of God’s creation in the Book of Genesis, the day that God blesses and makes holy. And this—the seventh day by John’s reckoning—is the day that Jesus’ glory will begin to be revealed in the sign at Cana.

The references to Mary in this passage in John’s Gospel bring to mind other allusions to the Genesis account of creation, the Fall, and Israel of old. Just as the first woman in Genesis is called the mother of all living things, the new woman at the foot of the cross is called the mother of the church (Jn 19:26-27). Just as the first woman counseled the first man to defy God and eat the fruit, the new woman brings the people’s needs to her Son and teaches the people to obey Him in faith: “Do whatever He tells you.” Just as Israel gathers at Mount Sinai proclaiming, “Everything the Lord has said, we will do” (Exodus 19:8; 34:3-7; Deuteronomy 5:27), the mother of Jesus urges the servants to “do whatever he tells you.”

*(Allow about 5 - 10 minutes for reactions to the **Commentary** and newly discovered insights.)*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. ***“The Lord delights in you”*** (Isaiah 62:1-5)
 - a) What experience have you had of God delighting in you?
 - b) How have you experienced going from “Forsaken” and “Desolate” to “My Delight” and “Espoused?”

2. ***“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good”*** (1Cor.12:4-11)
 - a) How or when have we experienced this outpouring of the Holy Spirit?
 - b) With which of the gifts of the Spirit can you identify?
 - c) Which gift(s) of the Holy Spirit would you like to possess in a deeper way?
 - d) How have my gift(s) contributed to my life and reflected the life of Mary and her “Yes” to God, and bringing “some benefit to others?”

3. ***“Do whatever he tells you”*** (John 2:1-12)

Mary’s words bring joy and challenge to each one of us.

 - a) When have you been conscious of the inspiration “Do whatever he tells you”?
 - b) What are the “miracles” that you have experienced with the Lord?
 - c) Did you (like Mary) feel like an instrument in a way that others experienced a “miracle” because of you?
 - d) How did Jesus change the “water” of your life into “wine”?

CARING-PRAYING TIME (15 to 20 minutes)

1. **Word for the Week:** “*Do whatever he tells you*” (John 2:5)

2. **Suggestion for the Week:**

During this week, take time to reflect on the “miracles” of God in your life. Try to identify any pattern that appears: how God intervened, how you responded, how God’s grace triumphed. This awareness may help you to be a more active agent of the “miracles” of God in the lives of others. Like Mary, your “may it be done to me” will be the first step towards your “Do whatever He tells you.” Don’t underestimate the power of your words and actions in the lives of those you meet.

3. **Intercessions:** (Response: **Lord, hear our prayer**)

That we may celebrate the faithfulness of Mary and glory in the salvation that has come to us through her “Yes” to the Father, we pray ...

That we may listen to the gentle whispering of the Spirit in our lives so that we will echo the words of Mary, “may it be done to me,” we pray ...

That we may be attentive as you speak to us in the ordinary and not so ordinary happenings in our daily lives, we pray...

That we may have the courage to faithfully live the invitation to “Do whatever He tells you” for the people in our lives, our families, and our communities, we pray ...

That the “new wine” of Jesus will help us to recognize and accept His power to transform us, we pray ...

That we may be signs of hope for those burdened by worry, fear, or abandonment, we pray...

For Pope Francis’ monthly intention: that we pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution; may their own rights and dignity be recognized, which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human family, we pray ...

How can we help you in prayer this week?

Let us pray (together)

Heavenly Creator, You have fashioned us in wonderful ways,
given us new life in your Son, Jesus, and shared the Holy Spirit with us.
May our time together enrich us and challenge us to recognize your life in us,
and the power and influence we can have in the lives of others,
bringing them to you and to your Church.

We ask this of you, almighty God, in union with the Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God’s favors on us today, we pray that all those in our influence be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we say united as one, **OUR FATHER...**

Celebrating the Word, Resurrection Ministries of the Congregation of the Resurrection Ontario-Kentucky Province (including the former Resurrection Centre), 265 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G7. (Celebrating the Word was founded by Father Frank Ruetz, C.R. deceased 2012). For information: **website:** www.resurrectionists.ca. **Email:** provincialoffice@resurrectioncollege.ca The Scripture version used in this commentary is the New Revised Standard Version (copyrighted by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA).