



Homily given by  
His Eminence Cardinal  
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*Archbishop of Quebec*  
*Primate of Canada*

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME**  
*Saint Patrick's Parish, Quebec, QC, January 17, 2016*

***“ Do whatever he tells you ”***

Dear brothers and sisters,

What a declaration of love, a poetic and romantic declaration. And who this fiancée be, with such eloquence and intensity in his feelings who is able to say : « *For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, 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 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* ».

Who is this fiancée ? None other than the Lord our God. For that is how he loves his People, that is how he loves us. From the very beginning, he has always wanted to enter into a loving relationship with humanity ; and even more than a relationship. He's invited us to a Covenant to intimacy and faithful love.

Of course we know how history unfolded throughout the ages... Despite God's faithfulness and love, his People has many a times drifted away, turning it's back to God and breaking the Covenant, choosing to disobey and live in idolatry and sometimes with indifference. That is not only the fate of the people of Israel, we must humbly admit that we too have not always respected God's Word and lived up to the Covenant. What is the most surprising, to the point that we have a hard time to believe it, is that our God has always stretched out his hand of mercy to forgive us and

to put us back on our feet and thus renew our friendship and Covenant. So many prophets throughout the history of salvation were sent by the Lord to invite us to come back home, to convert, to reconsider his love. And yet so many times, we have disobeyed and abandoned Him.

Pope Francis understands this very well and it is one of the reasons why he has proclaimed this Holy Year as an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. The day he announced the Holy Year, he said: « *As the Apostle Paul reminded us, God never ceases to demonstrate the wealth of his mercy throughout the centuries. The transformation of the heart that leads us to confess our sins is a “gift from God”. We can not do it alone. The power to confess our sins is a gift from God, it is a gift, it is “his work” (cf. Eph 2:8-10). Being touched with tenderness by his hand and molded by his grace allows us to draw near to the priest without fear for our sins, but with the certainty that we will be accepted by him in the name of God, and understood despite our wretchedness; and even to approach without a defense attorney: we have the One who alone gave his life for our sins! It is He who always defends us before the Father, He always defends us. As we exit the confessional, we will feel his strength which gives new life and restores ardor to the faith. After confession we are reborn* ».

In less than a month, on February 10<sup>th</sup>, we will be entering the Lenten Season, a special time of grace and renewal that the Church invites us to live every year and allow the Lord to give us abundant life. You see and hear what is going on in the world there seems to be an explosion of horror, violence and terror that is affecting so many countries in the world. We cannot allow ourselves to be paralyzed by fear or anguish, nor can we stand by as mere spectators. The Word of God invites us to a deep experience of conversion, to allow the Lord to purify our thoughts and words, attitudes and all of our life so that we may be instruments of peace in the midst of the world. Renewed in our baptismal covenant, strengthened by the gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit, we will become missionary disciples that build and not destroy, reconcile and not divide, welcome and not exclude. Once again, at this time of our history, the Lord, through this Holy Year of Mercy, generously opens his heart so that we may find refuge and learn how to love and live in accord with his will and his Word.

The Gospel of the first miracle in Cana of Galilee is a story we know very well *the miracle in Canada*. Keep in mind the first reading of the declaration of Love of God for his People. Look and behold at the wedding feast, Jesus and his disciples were there and so was his mother and she said to him : « *They have no wine* ». Jesus changes the water into wine, the best wine was kept for the last. Because Jesus is the best wine. He is the one who came to bring us back home to the Father, to heal our broken hearts and renew our Covenant so that we can truly live a loving, faithful relationship. That is why Jesus is at the center of our lives. He is the Savior who opens the door to abundant life, to eternal life. We could not do it on our own. We are not able to reconcile ourselves. We need his help. Mary, the mother of Jesus understood that. That is why she tells the servants : « *Do whatever he tells you* ». Now there is a great phrase to jot down and put in a place we can see often because that is what we need to do: whatever Jesus tells us. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the Door that leads to true life. He is our Hope.

Father Réjean, that will be your responsibility here at St. Patrick's, to continue to walk with the people of God and be a good shepherd to them so that they may better know Jesus and follow

him more closely. May your ministry in the midst of this Congregation help them grow in an even more mature faith, and help them radiate the Joy of the Gospel. As you know, we are at a time in history that is very challenging; a time where we need to be together, not just side by side, but together, united in faith as to put all our gifts in service to others. As saint Paul reminded us in the second reading: « *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good* ». Listening and doing what Jesus tell us will help this community grow and bear much fruit. As the Holy Father invites us frequently to open our doors, may you help St. Patrick's to live fully it's vocation opening it's doors to outreach to those in need, and to open it's doors to welcome all those in need for a family, a community, in need of the brotherly love that Christianity foments.

Now, we continue our celebration. Having been nourished by the Word of God, we open our hearts to present to the Lord the intentions of the world and prepare to receive not the best wine but even better, to receive through communion, the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.