

28th Sunday
10/11/2020

THE INVITATION TO JOY

Weddings are a time of great joy and this parable while both strange and frightening, has also been called an invitation to joy. In it we find two movements: God's invitation and human response. God's salvation is a gift we cannot earn. It's not a question of cause but of response. It requires a response on our part to God who first loved us. There's an interesting detail here. Those who are called to the banquet are already invited but now when it's time to go, they refuse.

God's love is like a banquet. It's a free gift but what we do is still very important, In the early Church St. Gregory of Nyssa said that in one sense we become our own parents by the decisions we make because our decisions determine who we become. It's been said that God's grace is not only a gift but a responsibility. Like a marriage proposal, it must be accepted or rejected. We cannot earn our salvation but we can lose it. Faith challenges us to new life, to lead better lives, to allow Christ to make a difference.

We can reject it outright or be indifferent to it as seen in today's gospel. The fact that we're here today indicates we haven't rejected that gift. But we can take it for granted and forget what God has done for us; we can fall into minimalism—what's the bare requirement I have to do; or mediocrity—I just want to fly below the radar and get by. This all reminds us to open our hearts to more deeply receive God's love.

In prayer we do this. We stretch our hearts to better receive God's love. We seek to be clothed in Christ and grow into the person his love calls us to be.

What is the wedding garment that guest isn't wearing? It can mean a number of things. Perhaps it represents our own lifestyle. Maybe it represents the garment of baptism or perhaps its our own actions and good works. The lack of a wedding garment can be seen as unconverted life, a life untouched and unresponsive to the gospel and unchanged by God's love. If you die today what is the garment you will be wearing?

Isaiah uses the image of a holy mountain where a feast is prepared. In the Eucharist we too draw near to a holy mountain. A mountain where we're not only

fed by God but with God. Here in the person of Jesus God feeds us with himself. Here the saving action the saving action of Jesus' death and resurrection is made present to us. Here Jesus gifts himself to us under the form of bread and wine. Here we share in the victory of Jesus' death and resurrection. In the Eucharist we continue to put on the Lord Jesus. From this holy mountain hope flows into our lives.

God offers an invitation to share in the eternal love of Father, Son & Holy Spirit. It's an invitation to joy, to eternal joy. We can never earn this but it requires a response. It's free but it demands a response, we can reject it , be indifferent to it or accept it. This requires a decision that God will not make for us. May we turn away from minimalism and mediocrity. Rather, with lives of intentional faith, may we make that response in love knowing that the response we make, will make the difference. May we accept the invitation to joy.