

OCTOBER 11, 2020
Sunday of 28th Week in OT
Matthew 22: 1-14

“READINESS IN HIS BANQUET.”

“The Toronto Star invited teachers to submit excuses they had received from their students. They received these examples: A student explaining why he was late: “I was kidnapped by aliens and interrogated for three hours.” Another student, telling why he had failed to turn in his essay: “The bus driver read it and liked it so much he kept it to show to his passengers.” Another: “I got mugged on the way to school. I offered him my money, my watch, and my penknife but all he wanted was my essay.” Mike, a 14-year old, came up with a “watertight” excuse for arriving at school an hour late with his pants soaked to the knees: “I was just about to board the bus when I found I’d lost my ticket. Since it would take too long to walk to school, I hopped a fence onto a golf course. I headed for a creek that criss-crossed several fairways until I found a likely spot for lost balls. Retrieving three balls from their watery graves, I then made for the clubhouse where I sold the balls for bus fare! And that’s why I’m late.” Mike’s entry won. — In today’s Gospel, Jesus narrates a list of such lame excuses from the invited guests.”¹

How do we respond to the invitation of a very important person in our community? Do we refuse to come, or we say yes and prepare the best cloth and look for the occasion? We sometimes spend a lot of money to buy expensive clothing for an appropriate occasion, put some make up and perfume to look presentable, and even put on some jewelry to make us respectable. How about when Jesus Christ invited us to come to church and to pray, are we responding positively to His invitation and be prepared for the banquet?

¹ Fr. Anthony Kadavil, www.stories4homilies.co

“Food is used in all three readings today as an image of God’s favor and presence with His people. In both the first reading and the Gospel, the joys of salvation are compared to a great banquet of rich foods, choice wines and a place at the table with our Divine Host. In the first reading Isaiah describes the Messianic banquet on the Lord’s mountain. The prophet sees the mountain of the Holy City transformed into a grand banquet hall full of life and good things. He paints the picture of “a feast of rich food and choice wines.” The Responsorial Psalm (Ps 23) describes how, like a totally committed shepherd, God spares nothing in order to provide nourishment for His flock. In the second reading, Paul says that he lives like a guest invited to the Kingdom of God, enjoying vast spiritual benefits as a man of Faith. So will God provide for us, he assures us, and we, too, “can do all things in God Who strengthens us.” In the Gospel’s parable, Jesus describes the eschatological banquet of Heaven. He characterizes the reign of God as a wedding feast, a banquet of “calves and fatted cattle.” When the banquet is rejected by the chosen guests, it is offered to all and sundry.”²

My brothers and sisters, Prophet Isaiah is describing the banquet as a manifestation of the saving power of God offered to all who wants to be saved, the salvation that people are waiting for so long. Isaiah mentioned: “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”³ Even our Responsorial Psalm indicates our desire to be with the Lord all the time, a desire that we must have everyday: “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.” And St. Paul describes that he can do everything because God is his strength and always be at his side: “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”⁴ While the gospel reading speaks about the invitation of God and the answer that we will give must correspond to the life we live. When we say

² frtonyshomilies.com

³ Isaiah 25: 9 NRSV Catholic Bible Press, USA

⁴ Philippians 4: 13 NRSV Catholic Bible Press, USA

yes to the invitation, we must wear the 'wedding garment' – which is to live a life with God, follow His commandments and love Him as we love our neighbors. “Thus, all the readings suggest that God loves His people and provides for their eternal salvation. Today’s Scripture readings give us the strong warning that if we do not accept God’s love, if we reject His gift, we can have no place with Him. We have to stay prepared for the freely offered Heavenly Banquet by getting (in Baptism), and wearing every day, the freely given wedding garment of grace always. We “wear” the garment by cooperating with God’s grace in prayer, in attending Mass and receiving the Sacraments with devotion, in doing good and avoiding evil, and in responding to His love by lovingly sharing our blessings with others. The parable warns us that membership in a Church alone does not guarantee our eternal salvation.”⁵

My brothers and sisters, the banquet is ready, there’s a lot of food and wine, are we willing to come to God’s banquet? “In A Journey with the Saints, Thomas S. Kepler has written: ‘The secret of the revolution in the lives of the saints lies in the fact that their lives are centered in God. They never seem hurried, they have a large leisure, they trouble little about their influence; they refer the smallest things to God. They live in God.’ That is the great secret to successful living: the realization that when one reserves time to come to God's banquet, all of the rest of life will fall in place.”⁶ May we also thank the Lord for all good things that He gave us as we celebrate Thanksgiving Day tomorrow.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, give me the graces to stay and be with you always. I am nothing without you and may I always remember: ‘The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths.’⁷ Amen.”

⁵ frtonyshomilies.com

⁶ www.stories4homilies.co

⁷ Psalm 23: 1-3 NRSV Catholic Bible Press, USA