

Are You Dressed for the Banquet?

28th Week of Ordinary Time – Matthew 22: 1-14

October 15, 2017

This week's readings are all about good food and proper attire which translates into the eternal banquet and the Christian life. However, we might find it difficult to glean those ideas on our first review of the scriptures. We must first look at the context in which these texts were written so that we might come away with an understanding of how we apply them for our faith today. The ultimate question is: Are you dressed and ready for the banquet?

So what banquet is Jesus talking about in this week's gospel? He is referring to the "final banquet", the banquet that the prophet Isaiah is proclaiming in the first reading today. At the time of Christ, as is true today, many people did not have the basic necessities of life. Hence, the vision or ideal of a bountiful feast was the ultimate imagery of paradise.

Jesus uses this ideal as He challenges the chief priests and elders with another parable. **"The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son."** This would have been a common practice, considered an appropriate celebration for someone to hold at such a joyful time. However, evangelist, Matthew, uses this story of Jesus to illustrate and summarize the totality of salvation history.

The king of course is God. The son in the story is Jesus. The first and second servants who come **"to summon the invited guests to the feast"** are the prophets. The guest who arrives **"not dressed in a wedding garment"** is the Christian disciple who has accepted the invitation to follow Christ, but has failed to put on the required discipline (garment) of the Christian life. If you wish to be a follower of Christ then one must dress the part which requires personal on-going, ever-growing relationship with the Savior.

Jesus' conclusion to this parable is that the guest not dressed for the banquet will be bound up and cast out into the darkness. This is the fate of any one who ignores God's invitation to participate in the Eucharistic banquet or the Mission of Christ. Our attire is not fine clothing but the attitude and action of participating in the weekly Eucharist, serving the needs of our brothers and sisters, and aligning our lives toward the gospel, so that when the King comes we are prepared and ready to meet Him at the final banquet in heaven.

Blessings!



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