

As we get closer to the end of our liturgical year

The readings begin to reflect on the end times

Today we see heaven as a banquet

A king offering a wedding celebration for his son

Rich food and choice wine

A banquet like no other in the history of the world

The king is the Father

The Son is Jesus Christ

The servants are the prophets

The bride is the Church

And we are all invited

We do not have to work to prepare the celebration

God sets the table

The invitation is here

What is our response to such generosity?

To this love?

Isaiah sets the scene for us

On the mountain of the Lord

He will provide for all peoples

This is something new for Isaiah's people

Most thought of themselves as God's special people

You were either in or out

An Israelite or a pagan
But Isaiah points out that the Lord will provide for all peoples
Rich, juicy foods and choice wines
Death will be destroyed
The veil removed from our eyes and tears wiped from our faces
And in this last parable of Matthew's Gospel
Instead of a celebration on the Lord's mountain
Jesus describes a king preparing for his son's wedding
He sends invitations to a select group of guests
But they refused to come
So he sends other servants
Everything is ready! Come to the banquet!
They ignore them
They beat them
Some they even kill
The king is enraged
He sends his army and destroys the murderers and burns their city
Then he tells his servants
Go and invite anyone and everyone
Fill the halls of the palace
But when the king comes to the feast
He notices one without a wedding garment

The man cannot explain why he has no wedding garment

The king orders him to be tossed out into the darkness

So what is up with this king?

Is he just controlled by his emotions?

Having a bad day, he burns down a city

Because some of them ignored his invitation?

Then he kicks a man out of his banquet

A banquet he was at due to the king's insistence in the first place?

I think there is a bit more than that at hand

These seem to be exaggerations to make a point

Not literal translations to how God works

First the formal invitation of the king

We don't have a monarchy, so we don't see this insult

But for a king to give an invitation

When the king's word could mean life or death

This was a special event

For many people, it would be a once in a lifetime event

If even that often

So for them to refuse was a great offense

Even if it was for a good purpose

To the king, it is the refusal of the invitation that was the offense

Even more so than killing his servants

Sins against God are more serious than sins against our fellow men

Then after destroying the city

The king gives new orders

Go out and find people to come to the feast

Anyone and everyone

Just get them in the door

And the palace is filled with guests from all walks of life

But when the king enters,

He notices one not wearing his wedding garments

Why do you not have your wedding garment?

The man is speechless

So the king had another bad day right?

Throw him out

No, at the time they would have been provided a wedding garment

Refusing to wear it would have been an insult to the king

A slap in the face

These readings continue to be relevant for our lives today

They show that our Church is a Scriptural Church

**In this Gospel we see what lies behind one more of the recent
changes in the Eucharistic Prayer**

As we consecrate the wine

The priest used to say:

It will be shed for you and for all

So that sins may be forgiven

Now the priest says:

It will be poured out for you and for many

For the forgiveness of sins

This is not only more faithful to the Latin origin

But it is more faithful translation of Scripture as well

The many as opposed to the few

For those in Jesus time, it was either / or

The few were the Chosen Ones

The Israelite people, the insiders with God

The many were the outsiders, all the rest of humanity

Jesus came with an offer of salvation for all people

But salvation is a gift that one must accept

The insiders had received the invitation

They appeared to be respectful and righteous

But they were rebellious

They rejected Christ as the Son of God

They rejected the invitation

In the end, they would kill him

But not them alone

Every time we sin, we reject the invitation

Our sin is just as deadly as those that placed Christ on the cross

We have an invitation as well

An invitation from the Church

From the Word of God offered at each Mass

In our Bibles at home

An invitation in the form of the sacraments

Baptism, the Eucharist, confession, Confirmation, Marriage

Holy Orders, Anointing

All ways God extend His invitation through the Church to individuals

How many in our world today are too busy

Going to their work, to their games, to their hobbies

Hunting, shopping, whatever

Not doing anything bad in itself

But at the same time, refusing the invitation

Have we accepted the invitation?

Like those attending the feast of the king, we are present

But we also have to ask ourselves

Am I wearing my wedding garment?

Am I living my baptismal promises?

Am I living the conversion each of us is called to?

Is living a Catholic / Christian life a challenge?

Or do I find it easy?

Am I living in accord with God's law in all aspects of my life?

Does following God impact every aspect of my life?

Or just those that I am comfortable with?

Does my faith affect how I run my business?

How I treat my fellow workers or fellow students?

**Am I more worried about being a democrat or republican than
being Catholic?**

Am I more worried about my lifestyle or God's vineyard?

We must be aware of taking Christ for granted

Taking the invitation for granted

Thinking we will always have tomorrow

God doesn't bargain

We are in or out

Not in what we say alone

But in what we say and do

The invitation is what we say

The wedding garment is what we do

The banquet has been prepared

The invitation is right here for all people

The wedding garment is provided

Many will accept

Do you?