

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A

'The Lord's Wedding Feast.'

In Christ Jesus, God fulfils all our needs, as lavishly as only God can.

All of us, no matter how unworthy we may be, are invited to the wedding feast of his Son. We have only to enter.

(Readings: Isaiah 25: 6-10. Philippians 4: 12-14, 19-20. Matthew 22: 1-14.)

Jesus once compared the kingdom of God to a wedding feast a king gave his son. Intended as a warning against Israel, Jesus was telling the chief priests and elders that they were in danger of missing out on all the good things God had in store for them.

But the parable wasn't only meant for the ancient nation of Israel. It also has a message for our world of today. Jesus is saying, life is like a wedding feast, a banquet, and if we are not careful, we too, could end up missing out.

Unless you have some experience in preparing a meal for a large number of people you can easily fail to appreciate the amount of preparation that goes into making a banquet a success. It involves a great deal of hard work because banquets don't just happen.

Someone plans a menu. Another buys the food. Another prepares and cooks the food. Another decorates the hall. Another sets out tables and chairs and lays the tables. Another serves the food. And yet another cleans up the leftover mess after it is all finished.

So, it is with life. Most of the good things we enjoy in this world have been prepared by hands other than our own. You can start with the air, the water, and the sunlight that sustain life on this planet. We had absolutely nothing to do with any of these. They were all ready and waiting when we arrived. – God had prepared them for us long before we were born.

And that is only the beginning! Take a look at anything that you use and you will be hard pressed to think of any essential product or service that was not prepared by other hands. So, you can say that life is like a banquet, and most of the preparation was made for us by someone else.

Next, an invitation is extended to the guests. This can either be accepted or refused. Banquets are *not* compulsory affairs. All the host can do is to extend an invitation. What happens after that is entirely in the hands of those who have been invited. So, it is with life, since life comes to us with all kinds of invitations, some of which we decide to accept, and some of which we refuse.

Life extends to the young, an invitation to an educational banquet. All the necessary preparations have been made. The schools are there. The books from which they can learn are there. All the experience and wisdom of the ages is there for the taking.

Life says to the young, "Everything is ready. Come to the feast." Each must decide what he or she will do with the invitation. Some will accept, whereas others will refuse. Either way, what must be borne in mind is that the invitation has an expiry date. A time will come when it will be taken away and given to others, and many of the doors of education will be closed to you forever.

There are, of course, other invitations; other invitations, equally as important; other invitations, yet more important.

Take, for example, the invitation to be holy, and to develop a fine character. All the preparations have been made. Everything necessary for a person to become good is available. – The redeeming grace of Jesus is there. The fellowship of the Church is there. The inspiration and example of the holy saints is there. We are all invited to follow their example.

And the invitation to this holy life is offered to each and every one of us, to you and to me. It says “Everything is ready. Come to the feast.” It is up to us as individuals, to decide what we will do with the invitation. We can accept, and grow in God’s love, and the love of others, or we can refuse it. The only thing we cannot do is to stay where we are. Life cannot be put on hold.

Even so, be warned! – In accepting an invitation there may be certain conditions to be met. When the host, in the parable, came in to greet the guests, he noticed that one man was not properly dressed, and so, he had the man immediately evicted from the banquet.

At first reading this part of the parable, it is difficult to see Jesus in such a rejection. It’s just not in his character. Jesus was never one to stand on ceremony. And the manner of a person’s dress meant very little to him. So, what exactly is Jesus saying here?

He is telling us that if we accept the invitation, we must meet certain, necessary conditions.

Life is not a question of merely waking up one morning, and finding that you are an educated person, or that you are holy, or that you have a fine character. The daily decisions concerning right or wrong, integrity or compromise, are the conditions that must be met.

So, life is like a banquet where all the preparations have been made. Nothing is wanting. Nothing is left undone. God has done *everything* possible for us to achieve heaven. What happens next is up to us; to me and to you.

Our Lord’s invitation is in our hands. – Open it up... Read the words...

“Everything is ready. Come to the feast.”