



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE A

Fr. David Rosenberg

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"Many are invited, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:14

Biblical Scholars agree that this Sunday's "Parable of the Wedding Feast" Gospel is drawn from a number of oral traditions, adapted by Matthew to apply to both the injustice inflicted on Jesus and the necessity of being prepared for the inbreaking of the Heavenly Kingdom. The improperly dressed wedding guest in this parable was not prepared, and he paid the consequences. Furthermore, this parable points out that many of those to whom the invitation was first sent were disinterested and flat out rejected the call. But this had no negative impact on this great feast, because their place was offered to others by the servants the Master sent out. *"The servants went out and gathered all they found, bad and good alike, and the hall was filled with guests."* (Matt 22:10) This feast was not to be hindered and would be a time to celebrate and rejoice.

The "servants" are the witnesses and evangelists of the Word Made Flesh through the Master's Son, incarnate among us. Those that listened and heeded the call "turned" from the mundane order of their day, experienced an interior conversion, and joyfully participated in the Son's wedding. Jesus is telling us that this wedding feast represents the Christian life. We are called to overcome the great obstacles of indifference and arrogance: 1 Cor 23: *"we preach Christ crucified: an obstacle to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power and wisdom of God."* Pretending to one self that one only needs that which is self-acquired may possibly be the "sin" that cannot be forgiven, simply because the individual refuses to recognize the need for forgiveness.

A fascinating undercurrent to the parable is the realization that the one who toils hardest is the Father, God himself, as we hear in Matthew 22:4. *"Behold, I [the Father] have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast."* God yearns to satisfy our heart's deepest desire, but our imagination cannot even approach the reality of what God desires to give us. *"What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived — the things God has prepared for those who love him."* 1 Cor 2:9

In reflection, we come to grasp that the closest human image to the Kingdom of God is a wedding feast, the universal symbol for communal joy of the most enthralling kind. God fosters the deepest potential for joy in us by drawing us together each week for our great "Wedding Feast," the Mass for a celebration that will nourish and transform us into the Body of Christ, in body, mind and heart.

In this parable, as with all parables, its purpose is to engage our Holy Imagination to foster conversion, the turning of the heart and mind from the mundane to the extraordinary and that which is the breathtaking gift of the River of Life, given by the Son through His Heart of Mercy. In reflection we break down the barriers that hold us back from accepting this love. May we then bare in our heart the fruit of the deepest desire to turn and see the face of Christ in joy and thanksgiving all the days of our life.

May we take in the uncreated light of His Glory, as it becomes the sole source of our nourishment and happiness. Join the choir of angels in singing the hallelujahs of our wedding song: *"Light up the eyes of our hearts, Lord, so that we may see the hope that leads us to our destiny."* (Ephesians 1:18-21)

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus again in reply spoke to the chief priests and elders of the people in parables, saying,

*"The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king
who gave a wedding feast for his son.
He dispatched his servants
to summon the invited guests to the feast,
but they refused to come.
A second time he sent other servants, saying,
'Tell those invited: "Behold, I have prepared my banquet,
my calves and fattened cattle are killed,
and everything is ready; come to the feast."
Some ignored the invitation and went away,
one to his farm, another to his business.
The rest laid hold of his servants,
mistreated them, and killed them.
The king was enraged and sent his troops,
destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.
Then he said to his servants, 'The feast is ready,
but those who were invited were not worthy to come.
Go out, therefore, into the main roads
and invite to the feast whomever you find.'
The servants went out into the streets
and gathered all they found, bad and good alike,
and the hall was filled with guests.
But when the king came in to meet the guests,
he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment.
The king said to him, 'My friend, how is it
that you came in here without a wedding garment?'
But he was reduced to silence.
Then the king said to his attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet,
and cast him into the darkness outside,
where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'
Many are invited, but few are chosen."*

The Gospel of the Lord

