

“The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.”

In the name of the Father and the son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

In the Gospel passage for today we hear that people are invited to a wedding banquet. This invitation is declined. Can we cast our minds back to when we have refused an invitation, it may well be worth keeping that in mind as we continue.

When hearing of the wedding banquet, the first thing that came to my mind was God’s daily invite to the Altar. The Mass is the wedding banquet which we are all invited to attend. Christ is the bridegroom and we, the church, are Christ’s bride.

Are we able to consider a time when we have refused our invitation to the Mass? Can we think about the things that have held us back from daily attendance. How did we feel when we refused this invitation? There have been times when I have not received and it has left me feeling like something was lacking in my life.

In the parable it seems what Jesus is cleverly doing is comparing the people invited to the wedding banquet to those people who try to follow God, but are never able to fully accept, or perhaps even reject what God wants to give to them. It is important to note that Jesus does not say that the people will be rejected by God.

By not accepting the invitation from God we make our journey harder than it needs to be. When we accept the invitation from God and fully embrace the grace, healing, mercy and abounding love our lives should become more peaceful. We will still have troubles but there is a peace within the trouble. When we acknowledge that nothing comes from our own strength we can begin to live differently.

When Jesus talks about the wedding invitation being extended to more people? Is he showing that God's love will be poured out for ALL: gentiles, Samaritan, Jews, sinners and saints. God's abounding love is extended to all.

Letting the people know that a time was coming where it would be clear that God's love was for everyone.

But we can find comfort that when people were not fully accepting their invites from God, God's love never gets smaller. God's love remains consistent and the cornerstone.

So, can we use this parable to encourage us to seek out God's love more often? How may we challenge ourselves to actively seek God and ensure we are receiving all that God is offering to each and every one of us?

One way may be to make a conscious effort to attend the Mass daily? Or if we are currently receiving once a week, could we consider attending twice a week including the midweek Mass that is held here on a Wednesday morning?

It is worth noting that there does also appear to be a warning in the parable as well. This is about the person who attends the wedding banquet but is not appropriately dressed.

It seems there is much deepness to this and it goes far beyond what we wear. So don't worry I don't think Fr Simon is about to put a dresscode on the front door of the church.

If Jesus isn't talking about being appropriately dressed what is the message? Could it be that Jesus is trying to encourage us that all will be called, but the calling does require action from us? That we actively seek the fullness of God? That we are aware what is expected of us when we accept God's invitation.

It seems that Jesus wants the people who he is telling the parable to and for us now to understand that everyone is called to live a life with God. That God's love and abundance is given freely to all of us. But with this call we do have a responsibility.

We are responsible for our spiritual welfare, so we need to seek and find where God speaks to us most. It could be in prayer, in service to others, attending the Mass or reading scripture.

The list is endless, but the invitation to our own wedding banquet is upon us every day.

Jesus goes on to say that many are called but few are chosen. This is quite challenging, as it could seem that there is some exclusion here. I don't think this is what is

being said though. God does not exclude people, not anyone no matter their age, race, sexuality or belief.

This could however link to what the Spirit gives us eyes to see. This will be different for everyone, so you may find a person who during the Mass experiences heaven touching earth and all the Saints present, but not everyone one will see this. But what they may find is God's gentle whisper in prayer which another person may never encounter.

It seems Jesus may have been saying this to encourage the people listening to see how God would speak to each of them individually.

We all receive unique calls and experiences from God. So can we ensure we listen to how God is speaking to each of us as individuals. Not being disheartened but encouraged by others experiences. Using them to learn more about who God is.

So, what can we take from the Gospel passage today? Can we be encouraged to try and accept our invite to our own unique wedding banquet, could we aim to receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ more often.

Every Mass that is said or sung is God working bit by bit through us to heal and bring the new creation into fruition. We are invited to be a part of that, how can we refuse and how will we respond?

Amen

Isaiah 25:1-9

O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt. Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled. On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples,

the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, 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.

Philippians 4:1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Matthew 22:1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.

