

Wearing the Right Clothes

Daily Gospel / Liturgical Cycle B

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Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Matthew 22:1-14.

Jesus again in reply spoke to the chief priests and the 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 the king 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. He 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."

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, I believe in you because you have created me to be with you. I hope in you because you always give me what I need to be with you. I love you because you continue to invite me, in spite of my reticence and sinfulness.

Petition:

Lord, grant me the grace to value heaven and to live in such a way that I can get there.

1. How Dare You Not Accept!

God invites us to accept freely the gift of union with him to which he calls us. But, lo and behold, we can use our freedom badly and not accept the only thing that can truly make us happy. This occurs when we forget about God, no longer giving him the adoration and love he deserves as our Creator and Father, putting ourselves in first place, and becoming the sole criteria for our decisions and actions. This passage helps us to remember what type of freedom we have. We do not have absolute freedom. We can't choose what our end should be. Only God is our end. Our freedom is limited and consists in being free to choose the means that most efficaciously help us to reach that end.

2. An Undeserved Invitation:

Our possibility of getting to heaven is truly a gift from God. He invites us even though we are sinners, even though we don't take his Son's death and resurrection seriously, even though we continue to fall in spite of having all the grace and strength we need to overcome temptation. St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, states how hard it is for a man to give his life for another person (see Romans 4:7). Maybe he would do it for a very good person. Christ didn't give his life for good persons; he gave it for sinners. We should be moved to respond to this amazing manifestation of love for us: Total adherence to God is the only worthy response.

3. Dressing for the Occasion:

God is good, but he is not naive. He won't let us in to full communion with him if we do not value it properly. The robe mentioned in the Gospel passage is an image of the soul. The soul that has been purified and is prepared to enter into heaven wears a wedding robe. The soul that is full of selfishness and sin is improperly dressed. It is not a matter of God not having mercy on us. It's a matter of the use of our freedom. When we encounter something that has value and know that it will make us better, we have to appropriate that value through conscious effort. We have to live up to it. We can't be indifferent or superficial regarding heaven. We shouldn't regard it as just something possible; it should be an existential need.

Conversation with Christ:

Dear Lord, so many times I give more importance to my own satisfaction than to centering my attention and efforts on achieving true communion with you. Help me to value your invitation to reach heaven through a truly Christian life that prefers virtue to sin, disinterested love to selfishness, humility to pride.

Resolution:

Today I will try to work on a virtue that I need so as to respond to God's love for me.