

Jesus invites all to heaven

28th Sunday of the Year (October 13): (R3) Matthew 22:1-14; (R1) Isaiah 25:6-10; (R2) Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20.

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a king whose son was getting married. The king sent forth his servants to invite people to the wedding feast. In Jesus' time, weddings were huge events that could often last a week or longer. Many parents saved up for years in order to throw a lavish celebration. For this reason, wedding invitations were serious matters. They represented an enormous investment. But many who were invited to this wedding ignored the invitation. This displeased the king, so he told his servants to forget about those who had been invited and to gather up anyone they could find off the streets to bring them to the wedding feast instead. And the image we have is a wedding feast attended by the homeless, the rejected, the winos, and prostitutes, people off the streets. And there was a great party — thrown not for society's elite, but for all who would accept the invitation.

The kingdom of heaven is like that, says Jesus. All who will come are invited. No one is left out. The kingdom is like a family reunion — like a fun party, like a wedding feast.

Too often we see the Gospel as snatching brands from a burning fire; our Lord likened the Gospel to an invitation to a wedding feast?

An invitation to a wedding feast is an invitation to joy. The Christian religion is not a religion of gloom and doom; it is a religion of love, peace and joy. Who refuses God's invitation to accept the Gospel is missing the path to love, peace and joy.



Father Albert Shamon

A word for Sunday

Things that make people deaf to the invitation of the Gospel are not necessarily bad things. They can be good things like one's ordinary work, such as farming or doing one's business. But it is easy for people to get so busy with the things of time that they forget the things of eternity. The tragedy of life is that some allow the secondary things of life to crowd out the primary things. One can be so busy with the here and now as to forget the hereafter and eternity.

Our Lord does not focus so much on the punishment that will follow upon our neglect of this invitation as upon the joys and happiness that will be lost. "For of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'"

Finally, God's invitation is to all — at first to the Jews, then to the pagans and Gentiles — to the good and to the bad alike. It comes to all not because they deserve it, but because God is love and has a wide-armed, open-handed, generous heart. It is a free gift of God! It is his grace to all.

Our Lord followed his parable about an invitation to a wedding

feast by another: the parable of the guest who comes to the wedding feast without a wedding garment.

The point our Lord wished to make was that the way in which someone comes to anything demonstrates the spirit in which he comes. If we go to visit a friend, we usually try to dress properly for the occasion. It is not a question of putting on a show. It is simply a sign of respect we have for our friends.

It is so with God. He is not concerned with the clothes we wear, but with the spirit in which we serve him. Do we put on the garments of humility, of faith, of reverence in our service? That's the important factor. Do we approach God humbly, faithfully and reverently? This is the wedding garment God wishes us to put on — the wedding garment of virtue.

The happiest people in the world are those who strive to live a life of virtue. One's stock or bank account or wealth cannot give us love or peace or joy.

Money can buy a house but not a home. Money can buy a bed but not sleep. Money can buy a clock but not time. Money can buy position but not respect. Money can buy a book but not knowledge. Money can

DAILY READINGS

Monday, October 14

Galatians 4:22-24, 26-27;
31-5:1; Psalms 113:1-7;
Luke 11:29-32

Tuesday, October 15

Galatians 5:1-6;
Psalms 119:41, 43, 45, 47-48;
Luke 11:37-41

Wednesday, October 16

Galatians 5:18-25;
Psalms 1:1-4, 6; Luke 11:42-46

Thursday, October 17

Ephesians 1:1-10;
Psalms 98:1-6; Luke 11:47-54

Friday, October 18

2 Timothy 4:10-17B;
Psalms 145:10-13AB, 17-18;
Luke 10:1-9

Saturday, October 19

Ephesians 1:15-23;
Psalms 8:2-7; Luke 12:8-12

buy sex but not love. Money can buy insurance but not safety. Money can buy a pew in church but not salvation.

Only virtue, service of God, can bring happiness.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

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