

You're Invited

28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Sometimes when we are confronted with an amazing opportunity, we have a tendency to pass it up or reject it. Typically, we hesitate to proceed, might suspect its authenticity, or just disregard it all together; this is similar to what we encounter in this weekend's Gospel. Jesus speaks to us about a king, who prepares a lavish "wedding feast" for his son, but when he dispatches his servants to invite the guests, his invitation is rejected; in this case, it is met with indifference and suspicion. Here is a special and amazing invitation, and yet, the reaction by many was rejection.

Our first reading from Isaiah as well as the Psalm presents to us a beautiful picture of what the Lord's banquet entails - what God provides and offers us. We hear about "rich food," "choice wines," wiping away death, "restful waters," goodness, kindness, safety and courage. It seems that marvelous gifts await us at the banquet of the Lord, yet as Jesus tells us, many who were invited turned down the invitation preferring to dwell in the distractions of this life. In a way, the same could be said about us. At times, we can be like those that were first invited; we may find the Lord's invitation as too demanding or too challenging, we may be under the impression that we have not need to change, or we prefer to be misled by misconceptions of happiness that can be achieved on "our terms." All these things lead us to believe that the Lord's invitation in some way threatens our pursuit of happiness, but in reality, the danger of this rejection is that it prevents us from having a relationship with Christ and receiving the Lord's blessing.

One way that we tend to daily reject this invitation is in the way that the Lord invites us to be in relations with others. This invitation may come around a dinner table where we have the opportunity to speak and engage with our parents or children, but instead, we end up eating on the go or using cell phones at the table. The Lord may also be inviting us to partake in an honest dialogue with those holding an opposing opinion. We may be called to listen and proceed with respectful conversations, but instead, we approach with a personal agenda and engage in a negative argument. An invitation may also present itself in the form of reconciliation. The Lord wants to offer us his loving mercy and an opportunity for greater peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but instead, we turn our back to the Lord by asserting that we have nothing to confess, have no need to change, or have no time for the sacrament. There is also that weekly invitation to the Son's lavish "wedding feast," the Mass, but instead, we find ourselves making other plans or failing to see the Mass as something central and precious in our lives.

As we begin to see, this invitation from Christ is ongoing. True, we have accepted the Lord's initial invitation through the waters of Baptism, but the Lord never stops calling us.

He never stops inviting us to a deeper knowledge of ourselves, to a deeper understanding of communion, to a deeper appreciation of his Creation, and to a deeper understanding of our relationship with him. Today, He places before us all of the “goodness and kindness” that comes with this invitation, something that in a sense is too good to pass up; the question then remains, do we accept or reject the Lord’s invitation?