

2020 October 11

Twenty-eighth Sunday of the Ordinary Time

Readings:

First: Isaiah 25.6-10, "The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces" (8a)

Psalm 23, "He leads me in right paths for his name's sake" (4a)

Second: Philippians 4.12-14, 19-20, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." (13)

Gospel: Mathew 22.1-14, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy." (8)

Be among the Called and Chosen

In today readings there are two feasts, (1) in fact three. Isaiah is presenting a feast prepared by the Lord, a feast of rich food. In and through it the Lord is wiping away all the tears from the people. This is a very consoling, enriching, and desirable scenario. (2) St. Paul appreciates the generosity of the Philippians; it was not a feast, but people made provisions for St. Paul and he is thanking them and imparting on them a blessing.

(3) The wedding banquet Jesus presents in the parable is scary. It is aimed at the people at the upper strata of the society in those times and in our time. Many were invited. Most, if not all, of those invited accepted the invitation but chose not to go to the banquet with flimsy excuses. Some insulted and infuriated the host by mistreating and even killing the servants who were sent to remind the guests to come for the wedding feast. It was rejection of friendship and invitation to a relationship, which the king offered to the people, his guests who chose to reject both. The wedding feast was ready, and the king was angry and frustrated; he refused the food prepared to go waste, and so he collects people from the town, from the main streets and sidewalks and fills the hall.

From the parable we can infer that, since the new guests were not necessarily from the 'nobility circle', the king even provided them with the wedding dress in order that they may come well dressed for the occasion. Now it seems one among the new invitees did not care to put on the wedding garment provided. The king did not have an option but to throw that one into the outer darkness. We need to take this warning seriously.

Let us examine what has been our response to the invitation of the Lord? Where do we stand? Among the first invitees who refuse to respond to the Lord; among those who ill-treat and kill the king's servants; or are we part of the second invitees from the main streets and sidewalks? Do we belong to the category, which refuses to put on the wedding gown? Now, we must ask ourselves, is it God who rejects us and does not care for us, or are we the ones who reject him and his generosity, his blessings, and his offer of companionship? Any choice will have consequences. That is the meaning of accepting or rejecting the offer of God's friendship and his desire and design to enter a relationship with us.

Fr. George

