

28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A (2020)

Here's a question no one would have thought to ask at the beginning of this new year: can a commercial establishment legally refuse to let you in the door if you're not wearing a protective face mask? Or ask you to leave if you're already inside?

Absolutely. We've all seen many a sign saying, "No shirt, no shoes, no service." However, as long as stores aren't violating the federal Civil Rights Act by singling out a class of people for exclusion, their property is private property.

They can impose a dress code or rules of conduct. They can ask you to leave, or kick you out, just because they don't like the way you look— as long as they're not violating the law.

We just heard a story about a king who hosted a wedding feast for his son. The initial invitees either ignored the invitation or do a bunch of bad things to the king's servants. They seem not to "have time for that..." The king punishes them severely and sends his servants into the streets to **invite whomever they wish**. So far, so good.

But then there's this puzzling addendum tacked on to the end of the story. The king notices that **one person isn't properly dressed which elicits a reaction that is both** shocking and rude. He has him bound hand and food and cast out into the darkness. Yikes! Seems a little harsh, doesn't it?

But notice that the story doesn't mention anyone else coming to the feast without first putting on a wedding garment. So, why is this one guy singled out for such mistreatment?

Perhaps, the other people invited at the last minute went home and **did what was expected of them**. They knew that in this establishment, like many upscale restaurants "jackets are required." They each took the time and made the effort —knowing that this is **what the host would want**.

That one man, however, seems not to have the time for that— (even something as small as going home and changing). Maybe he wanted to experience the party —but only if **he didn't have to do a thing**.

And finally, let me ask you: what can't you be bothered with? (and since sentences should not end in a preposition), let me rephrase: this week, with what can you not be bothered? With whom can you not be bothered?

I still believe with all my heart that God is **inviting us to the best party ever**, the most sumptuous feast, a celebration that begins in this life and continues into eternity. And **I want to be a part of that**. And I want all of you to be there, too.

So, as we embark into our world this week— let's all be sure to check ourselves in the mirror, and make sure we have "put on Christ," before we head out the door.

