

Homily - Y28A - October 11, 2020

How rude is that? You're being awfully rude! Are you just naturally rude or have you been working at it?

Rude is an interesting word. No one likes to be called rude especially if we are not trying to be rude. Nevertheless, we are sometimes very rude to one another...often without knowing it.

Take for example today's gospel passage. We have a story personifying rudeness. A king announces a wedding party. When the time comes, the invited guests do not show up. Isn't that rude, especially when a king invites? Then, the king sends out his servants a second time to call the guests. This time, the gospel writer tells us that the guests had, so to speak, more important things to do: go to the farm, go to one's home or business. In fact, some just ignored the invitation. Even some of the servants were actually killed because of the message they were bringing.

Have you ever wanted to throw a party, have people say that they would come, but then, did not. Don't we feel like throttling them? Remember that Jesus is speaking a story to illustrate a point. The point is quite simple. The king invites the people to a rich banquet, a banquet filled with all that we could possibly want. In the story, the king is God inviting us to his heavenly kingdom...a kingdom that will provide all that we could ever hope for.

But some people ignore the invitation, perhaps figuring that something better might come along. Some clearly state that they prefer other, so to speak, more important things.

We may be saying, well, I definitely want to be part of that kingdom. That's true. But, you know, that kingdom begins here on earth. It's called the People of God, the Church, God's people joined together in that kingdom begun here on earth reaching its fulfillment in heaven. Please note, I use the word "fulfilled." In other words, if you know about the kingdom, you need to be part of it now.

The erosion of participation in Church life that we have witnessed over the past 40 years replicates very well what we heard about in today's gospel. God gives us a weekly invitation to come to his feast, but so many are living in a parallel universe laden with excuses for not showing up.

Some may say to me that they cannot participate right now because of the Corona Virus pandemic. That's true. Some do not feel safe enough to come to church amid the current uncertainty. However, Covid-19 does

not excuse from keeping the Sabbath. Actually if you cannot come to church, then you should carve out a specific time to pray, rather than a vague thought about keeping the Sabbath. I have noticed that fewer participate in our Facebook Masses on Saturday and Sunday. Is that lack of participation a sign of further deterioration of Sabbath worship?

We, meaning you, need to keep inviting people to come and worship together. After all, our religion is not a private affair. Even going back into the Old Testament we see that worship was meant to be public and communal in addition to private worship.

Don't say to me something like: "I don't want to hound them because it might turn them off." God does not stop hounding us even when we turn him off....your voice expresses your faith and your concern for others. Do the advertising executives at McDonald's say: "We had better stop advertising because we don't want to turn off our customers." No, they clearly state why we should go to McDonald's. Do you ever say to your child: "Well, I think you should stop studying. After all, I don't want you to wear out your brain."

Accepting God's invitation is not a matter of saying yes once and then forgetting all about it. Accepting God's invitation resembles the "I do" of marriage. The "I do" does not end the process, rather it begins the process. Saying yes to God is not graduating from school. After all, graduation does not end one's learning, but should be the first step towards further learning.

*Lord, help us learn
from the men in today's parable.*

*Help us to accept your invitation
to the banquet of eternal life.*

Help us avoid making the same mistake they did.

*Keep us from becoming
so caught up with the affairs of this life that we forget about
eternal life.*

*Keep holy the Sabbath is your law, but keep holy the sabbath is
also our privilege!*