

*He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbours, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."*  
Luke 14:12-14

### **Meditation**

Who do you honour at your table? The Lord is always ready to receive us at his table. As far as we can tell from the gospel accounts, Jesus never refused a dinner invitation! Why, in this particular instance, does Jesus lecture his host on who he should or shouldn't invite to dinner? Did his host expect some favour or reward from Jesus? Did he want to impress his neighbours with the honour of hosting the "miracle worker" from Galilee?

Jesus probes our hearts as well. Do you only show favour and generosity to those who will repay you in kind? What about those who do not have the means to repay you – the poor, the sick, the refugees and all the marginalised? Generosity demands a measure of self-sacrifice. It doesn't impoverish, but rather enriches the soul of the giver. True generosity springs from a heart full of mercy and compassion. God loved us first, and our love is a response of gratitude to his great mercy and kindness towards us. We cannot outdo God in his generosity towards us. Do you give freely as Jesus gives without expectation for personal gain or reward?

### **Pope Francis challenges us to think deeply about our service to the poor:**

*"God's heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself 'became poor' (2 Cor 8:9). The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor. Salvation came to us from the 'yes' uttered by a lowly maiden from a small town on the fringes of a great empire. The Saviour was born in a manger, in the midst of animals, like children of poor families.....*

*He assured those burdened by sorrow and crushed by poverty that God has a special place for them in his heart: "Blessed are you poor, yours is the kingdom of God" (Lk 6:20); he made himself one of them: "I was hungry and you gave me food to eat", and he taught them that mercy towards all of these is the key to heaven (cf. Mt 25:5ff.)." (Evangeliū Gaudium 197)*

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, you said when we love and serve anyone in need; we love and serve you. Please open our eyes to see you especially in those who are lonely, unloved, poor or marginalised, and recognise the privilege it is to serve them and so to serve you, our Lord.