



Matthew 22:1-14

1 Jesus began to speak to them in parables once again, **2** ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son’s wedding. **3** He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come. **4** Next he sent some more servants. “Tell those who have been invited,” he said, “that I have my banquet all prepared, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, everything is ready. Come to the wedding.” **5** But they were not interested: one went off to his farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his servants, maltreated them and killed them. **6** The king was furious. He dispatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town. **8** Then he said to his servants, “The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, **9** go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone you can find to the wedding.” **10** So these servants went out on to the roads and collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests. **11** When the king came in to look at the guests he noticed one man who was not wearing a wedding garment, **12** and said to him, “How did you get in here, my friend, without a wedding garment?” And the man was silent. **13** Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot and throw him out into the dark, where there will be weeping, and grinding of teeth.” **14** For many are called, but few are chosen.’

Other readings: Isaiah 25:6-10, Psalm 22 (23), Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

The parable we hear today takes up the image of the feast of the kingdom of heaven. The theme of the banquet of eternal life runs through our readings today. The prophet Isaiah speaks of the day when all will be united at the feast provided by God. Our psalm reminds us of the Lord who prepares a banquet for each one. Jesus, who welcomed the unwanted and ate and drank with them during his earthly life, gives this parable of the wedding feast as a symbol of the life of the kingdom. The reluctance of so many to come to the wedding speaks of people who are immersed in the things of the world and have no time for the things of God. We can make many excuses for not responding to God’s call. The invitation is extended to all, ‘bad and good alike’. There is a constant need to respond to God’s invitation, and make changes in our lives. In the final verses of the parable there is a dramatic change of tone. Why is the man without the wedding garment thrown out? It seems to contradict the generosity of the earlier invitation to all. God’s invitation is indeed directed to all, but there is always need of a deliberate response. To be carried along by the crowd without understanding where we are going is as bad as refusing the invitation in the first place!

Do I allow my daily preoccupations to take precedence over the search to find God?

Do I take my faith for granted without really trying to grow in knowledge and love of God?

We thank God for inviting us into communion with him.

We thank God for the sacraments, particularly the Holy Eucharist.