

# 28<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## St. Matthew 22:1-14

Why did not those that had been invited to the wedding banquet come? Those who were first invited ignored the invitation. When a second invitation was given they said they had other things to do; some to look after their farms, others to look after their businesses. In other words they were concerned with what was urgent rather than what was important.

Attending to our religious duties can be treated similarly. We all know that attending Mass is important but we might argue that it is not necessarily urgent. "If I miss Mass this week I can always go next week." And we might even justify it by saying that God understands. "God understands that I need to get lunch ready because I am having guests so I don't have time to go to Mass." "God understands that I had a late night so I need to sleep-in because sleep is important for my health so I'll ending up missing Mass." "God understands that I have a game this weekend so I do not have time to go to Mass." Somehow, what is urgent takes over that which is important. But, really, it is not about making excuses or about trying to believe that God understands. It is about not mistaking what is necessary for what is optional.

And we must not just go to Mass or just say our prayers. We must immerse ourselves in these things. The Mass itself is a mutual self-surrendering; we place ourselves before God just as God places Himself before us, we are to surrender ourselves to God just as God surrenders Himself to us.

All that is mortal must be consumed by the passion and death of Christ that is made present in the holy sacrifice of the Mass so that it might share in the glory of His resurrection. We should be caught up in the Mass. We should be transported. We should see, if not with our eyes then with our hearts that in this place heaven and earth meet. We should be carried in prayer and transformed

so that in the mutual engagement of you and I and God we see Christ manifested, made real and tangible. This is the intimacy, the union that God desires to have with us. This is why in the gospel that invitation after invitation is made to the people to come to the wedding banquet. That is why the Priest proclaims in the words of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Divine: “Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.” This is the invitation we first received at our baptism. That is our wedding garment that, as the Priest or Deacon says at baptism, “See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. Bring that dignity unstained into the kingdom of heaven.”

Pray to never lose sight of what is important for what is urgent, for what is necessary for what is optional. If we forsake the importance of Faith for the urgency of the world then we must expect a crash sooner or later. None of us have the right to the Body and Blood of Christ. None of us have the right to heaven. None of us should presume that we will ascend to heaven immediately upon our death or even at all because Hell is a real possibility. But we have been invited to the wedding banquet of the Lamb and we accept that invitation by our participation in the mission of the Church and by our reception of the Sacraments. So, in particular by the Sacrament of Penance—confession—we can ensure that by the grace of the Holy Spirit we may wear our wedding garment unstained into the wedding banquet of the Lamb.