

Homily: 28th Sunday Cycle A: 2023: Is 25: 6-10a; Ps 23; Phil 4: 12-14, 19-20; Mt. 22:1-10
“*How to be invited into the Divine Wedding Banquet – rather than be thrown out of it!*”

1. **Jesus is challenging us today to put His Kingdom as a first priority.** What is the kingdom or wedding feast that He is talking about? The kingdom is our life now in the Church, which ultimately leads to the Heavenly Kingdom. Is loving God and seeking His Kingdom our number one priority? *We humans have a tendency to put work or studies, our family and other relationships, hobbies, games & sports, ahead of God on our list of priorities.* I’ve seen ppl out & about doing many things – when they weren’t at Sunday Mass. What?! This is exactly what was going on in the parable when those invited by the King, instead went off to their business or to their farm or who knows what else?! We must put God first in our life! Truly we must give God our best, not the scraps of our life!
2. **The spiritual life or our life of prayer and union with God is the key to making Him first.** A question to ask ourselves to gauge whether we are truly making progress and maturing spiritually is: do I spend as much time in prayer when things are going good in my life as when things are bad? *If we spend more time praying when things are going bad, but then when the situation is resolved, go back to putting God down on the list, it is something we need to change.* Or vice versa: *some of us pray when things are going well, and get mad at God when things are going bad.* We are only truly being faithful to Him if we love God equally in good times and bad times, in season and out of season. In close relation to this we need to be careful that we don’t seek **spiritual consolations** for their own sake. This is a **danger**, for when we have the good spiritual feeling of God’s presence and sweetness we like to pray, but when those are not there we tend not to. A similar analogy is when we are trying to train a child in virtue, we often bribe them, e.g., *if you clean your room, we will take you to the store to buy something nice, or if you guys get along today, I will take you for an ice cream, etc.* God, in a similar way, when we begin in the spiritual life, will give us a sweet feeling (consolation) in our soul, often times, as an **incentive** to continue praying and growing in spiritual virtue, but at some point He will take those consolations away for a time, long or short, in order to mature and purify us, to see if we will love Him for His own sake rather than for simply the consolation that comes from loving Him (*this is the reality of spiritual dryness as the saints call it*). Are we relying too much on our feelings in the spiritual life and relying too much on consolations in determining how much we do pray? We need to ask the Holy Spirit to help us to love God in our **will** and not simply in our fickle human **feelings**.

3. **A final lesson** to draw from this parable today concerns that mysterious passage at the end of the parable when the guy gets thrown out for not wearing a wedding garment. What is that all about? The man without the wedding garment is someone who is not willing to change; he just pretends he is faithful and part of the King's household. This ties into the reality that it is not enough to come to the banquet, i.e., the Mass, but we must then live out the Mass in our daily life, and come to daily Mass as much as we can. We cannot be "*an angel on Sunday and a devil the rest of the week*" as the old saying goes. We must strive with God's grace to live out our entire Catholic faith in integrity throughout the week. No deliberate picking and choosing among the teachings of Christ and His Catholic Church but embracing the whole package. I want to recommend **one practical spiritual aid** to help with that. I recommend that everyone, esp. those with little children and teenagers, if you do not already do so, to pray a set of the mysteries of the **Rosary** on a daily basis. It will be the best 20 minutes you spend each day, apart from if you are able to go to daily Mass. Please make the sacrifice, and Our Lady will lead you into ever closer union with the Trinity; she teaches us how to love God more deeply. If you are not in the habit of praying the Rosary, perhaps start with one decade a day for a week, and by the end of 5 weeks you will be praying a full set of the mysteries. It will change your life! **Please ask the Holy Spirit to help you to truly meditate on the mysteries of Jesus in union with Mary, and then the Rosary comes alive; it is not just rote prayers as some say, but rather a "school of the Gospel" in company with the human being who knows Jesus best, His dear mother Mary.** *And as we know from the Gospel of St. John, Jesus, as He was dying on the Cross, entrusted Mary to St. John and St. John to Mary. The Church has thus always understood St. John as representing the whole human race, of which Mary is now the spiritual mother of all by the will of Christ.* She is our mother now too! How awesome! Do we realize the deep meaning of that reality? **See the total consecration of our life to Jesus thru Mary** as St. Louis de Montfort teaches. I can help you make that consecration if you are interested - get in touch with me. May Blessed Mary help us to walk on the narrow path that leads to union with God in this life and ultimate union with God in the Kingdom of Heaven. God bless.

Recommended Reading:

True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin. St. Louis de Montfort. Montfort Publications. Bay Shore N.Y. See www.montfortmissionaries.com or www.tanbooks.com. (This is the beautiful book that shows you how to consecrate your entire life to Jesus through and with Mary's help).

The Secret of the Rosary. St. Louis de Montfort. TAN Books. Charlotte, N.C. www.tanbooks.com.