

## 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

### GOSPEL

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Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come. 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." 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.

The king was furious. He dispatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone you can find to the wedding." So these servants went out to the roads and collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests.'

(Matthew 22:1-10)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The wedding banquet is a commonly used image for the kingdom of God in the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures. The feast was a symbol of the abundance to be provided by God for those who have faith.
- A Jewish wedding celebration often lasted for as long as a week, which may explain why some were reluctant to attend. Like living in the kingdom, it was demanding!

### EXPLORING THE WORD

There are two parables in today's gospel. The first is about the invited guests who are too preoccupied with their own business and affairs to come to the prepared feast. When we consider the length of time that guests may be involved in celebration, especially one given by a wealthy king, this is more understandable. The response of the invited guests, the chosen people, was to kill the messengers, an echo of last week's gospel, where the people of Israel rejected the prophets. The second parable, in the longer version of the gospel, is about the one who came but did not bother to change into his wedding garments. In both, the reaction of the king seems somewhat extreme! But the parables make an important point about the invitation being offered by God: those who do not bother to respond will lose their invitation; those who accept but fail to change their way of life (their clothes) will also lose out. This text warns that Christian life is a web made up of God's gracious invitation and our free response.

- What are you being invited to? Is this an invitation for the present only?
- Do you identify with any of the characters in the gospel? Discuss the various reactions.

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- What excuses do you make for not doing what you ought?
- Are there things that keep you from responding fully to the invitation?
- Share stories of times you avoided invitations and the excuses you used not to go somewhere you didn't want to be.
- What are the things in your life that preoccupy you and make it difficult to respond to the invitation of God?
- Recite this line from the psalm every day this week:

*You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my enemies. My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing.*

(Psalm 32:5)

