

**They would not come to the feast!****Reading 1: Is 25: 6 – 10****Responsorial Psalms: Ps 23: 1 – 6****Reading 2: Phil 4:12-14, 19 – 20****Gospel****: Matthew 22: 1 – 14**

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.' But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

**Meditation:**

What can a royal wedding party tell us about God's kingdom? One of the most beautiful images used in the Scriptures to depict what heaven is like is the wedding celebration and royal feast given by the King for his newly-wed son and bride. Whatever grand feast we can imagine on earth, heaven is the feast of all feasts because the Lord of heaven and earth invites us to the most important banquet of all - not simply as bystanders or guests - but as members of Christ's own body, his bride the church! The last book in the Bible ends with an invitation to the wedding feast of the Lamb - the Lord Jesus who offered his life as an atoning sacrifice for our sins and who now reigns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. *The Spirit and the Bride say, Come!* The Lord Jesus invites us to be united with himself in his heavenly kingdom of peace and righteousness.

**Whose interests come first - God or mine?**

Why does Jesus' parable of the marriage feast seem to focus on an angry king who ends up punishing those who refused his invitation and who mistreated his servants? Jesus' parable contains two stories. The first has to do with the original guests invited to the marriage feast. The king had sent out invitations well in advance to his subjects, so they would have plenty of time to prepare for coming to the feast. How insulting for the invited guests to then refuse when the time for celebrating came! They made light of the King's request because they put their own interests above his. They not only insulted the King but the heir to the throne as well. The king's anger is justified because they openly refused to give the king the honour he was due. Jesus directed this warning to the Jews of his day, both to convey how much God wanted them to share in the joy of his kingdom, but also to give a warning about the consequences of refusing his Son, their Messiah and Saviour.

**An invitation we cannot refuse!**

The second part of the story focuses on those who had no claim on the king and who would never have considered getting such an invitation. The "good and the bad" along the highways certainly referred to the Gentiles (non-Jews) and to sinners. This is certainly an invitation of grace - undeserved, unmerited favour and kindness! But this invitation also contains a warning for those who refuse it or who approach the wedding feast unworthily. God's grace is a free gift, but it is also an awesome responsibility.

God invites each of us as his friends to his heavenly banquet that we may celebrate with him and share in his joy. Are you ready to feast at the Lord's banquet table?

**Questions for Community Faith Sharing:**

1. Who are the people whom you normally invite and do not invite to your feasts? Why?
2. What are the reasons today that prevent you from participation in society and in the Church?
3. What are reasons that you give to exclude yourself from the duty to participate in the community?  
Are those reasons just?

"Lord Jesus, may I always know the joy of living in your presence and grow in the hope of seeing you face to face in your everlasting kingdom."