

# Sunday, October 15, 2017

## Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

### Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Isaiah 25:6-10

2nd Reading: Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

Responsorial: Psalm 23

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

## Accepting Jesus' Invitation to Receive Him in a Deeper Way

*How is it that you came in here without a wedding garment? (Matthew 22:12)*

According to Jesus' parable, some who were invited to the wedding banquet said no. They were too busy. And it seems that one man who did show up hadn't come to honor the king's son. He came without the proper wedding garment. He came to partake of the royal feast, but with a less-than-royal purpose.

In Scripture, the image of a wedding garment is used to represent the essential elements of our life in Christ. It is described as a garment of salvation, a garment of obedience, and a garment of purity.

Now, if we were to apply this parable to the Mass, the story might look like this: some ignored God's invitation to worship. One man, however, came and ate the Bread of Life, but he had no intention of following Jesus. His heart wasn't clothed in the right "garment."

We face this question every Sunday: "Have I come to the Eucharistic feast with my heart properly dressed? Or have I come without thinking about how eating the Bread of Life is meant to help me change my heart?" Coming properly dressed means being open to Jesus' grace and blessing. Coming without our garment may not mean being "thrown out" as the man in the parable was, but it could mean losing touch with the power and love at the heart of the Eucharist.

Let's come to the wedding banquet today with a pliable heart. Let's tell the Lord that we need his Bread of Life. Let's enjoy the food that Jesus offers us. Then let's leave Mass determined to keep our hearts covered all day long in this wonderful garment of salvation, obedience, and purity. Today and every Sunday, let's remind ourselves that the Mass is a wonderful precursor to the great wedding banquet that will come when Jesus returns in glory. Let's remember that if we keep our garment on now, we'll be clothed in Christ at the end!

*"Thank you, Jesus, for inviting me to your banquet. Help me to follow you."*

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**Questions for Reflection/Discussion:**

1. The first reading opens with these words: "On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples a feast of rich food and choice wines, juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines. On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the web that is woven over all nations; he will destroy death forever."
  - Do you believe that every day in prayer, you have an opportunity to consume the richness of the word of God and the richness of his presence?
  - How do you usually approach your prayer times? Do you try to do it every day? If not, why not?
2. The responsorial psalm, Psalm 23, is probably the psalm that we all are most familiar with. Yet this familiarity can cause us to miss some of the psalm's uplifting words. It speaks of the Lord's abiding presence each day as "he refreshes my soul" and "he guides me in the right path for his name's sake." In addition, these words are also words of great comfort no matter where our day leads us, "Even though I walk in the dark valley, I fear no evil; for you are at my side,"
  - How conscious are you during the day of the Lord's abiding presence? How has he refreshed your soul?
  - What can you do to make yourself more aware of his presence each day, even a very busy day?
3. The second reading has some of St. Paul's most uplifting words: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" and "My God will fully supply whatever you need, in accord with the glorious riches in Christ Jesus." These are great words to remember, as you turn to God and ask for his help in difficult situations.
  - What do the Scripture verses quoted above mean to you? In what ways could they help you as you turn to God and ask for his help in difficult situations? Do you think they are worth trying to memorize? Why or why not?
  - How often do you "consult" the Lord when making a decision versus just relying on your own wisdom and strength? What practical things can you do to involve him more in your daily decision making?
4. In the Gospel reading, Jesus' parable to the "chief priests and elders" begins with these words: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they refused to come." In this parable, we too can be like the individuals who "refused to come" or "ignored the invitation" or be so wrapped up in day to day responsibilities that we don't have time to accept the Lord's invitation to spend time with him.
  - Do you see God's invitation to you to have a greater part in your life as a marvelous opportunity to experience a deeper relationship with him? How do you respond to this invitation?
  - What steps can you take to overcome any obstacles in your life that keep you from fully responding to God's invitation?
5. The Gospel parable also deals with a guest who was not wearing a wedding garment and was thrown out of the wedding. Jesus wants us to be wearing the right garment for his wedding feast.
  - What do you think is the right wedding garment that Jesus was trying to describe?
  - What do you believe the wedding garment represents for each of us as Catholic Christians?
6. The meditation, which is also a reflection on the Jesus' parable in the Gospel reading, compares the wedding feast, or banquet, to the Mass with these words: "Now, if we were to apply this parable to the Mass, the story might look like this: some ignored God's invitation to worship. One man, however, came and ate the Bread of Life, but he had no intention of following Jesus. His heart wasn't clothed in the right 'garment.' We face this question every Sunday: 'Have I come to the Eucharistic feast with my heart properly dressed? Or have I come without thinking about how eating the Bread of Life is meant to help me change my heart?' "The meditation goes on to tell us to "come to the wedding banquet today with a pliable heart."
  - How would you answer the above questions from the meditation?
  - What can you do to "come to the wedding banquet today with a pliable heart"?
  - What can you do to experience more deeply the presence of the Lord when you receive the Eucharist?
7. Take some time now to pray and thank the Lord for his invitation to his banquet, and for the grace to say yes and to give your life more fully to him. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

***"Thank you, Jesus, for inviting me to your banquet. Help me to follow you."***

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is in partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)) to the military, prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. He is also a member of the **National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal** (<http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org/>) and a member of the board of

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