

28th Sunday of Ordinary Time(a)

October 14-15, 2017

Isaiah 25:6-10a

Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

Matthew 1-14

- So, we are hosting a banquet, a wedding reception, a retirement party...Not your ordinary run of the mill event but let's call it the social event of the year...Many covet an invitation to the event but as usual the venue can only hold so many...
- So, when the invitation is sent out it turns out that the event is not going to be where people thought it was going to be. It turns out it is not going to be when people thought it was going to be...It turns out the expectation of formal attire is just going to be too expensive...so one by one the rejections start coming in and many simply decide not to bother to respond at all...but the venue has been paid for, the tables are set and the food is delicious and abundant, and there is a wicked good live band providing entertainment...What would we do...?
- My little attempt at a parable is not near as clever as Jesus' parable. The banquet that Jesus is talking about is more than the social event of the year. The banquet that Jesus is talking about is more than good food and a wicked good band. The banquet that Jesus is talking about is the exalted destiny of those who respond positively to the call to holiness, to the call to be extraordinary.
- It's easy to think that because Jesus, through his cross and resurrection, has opened the gates of heaven that all we need do is show up. It's easy to think that claiming to be a follower, a disciple of Jesus is enough to gain us entry into the banquet. But if this is our way of thinking we may very well find ourselves on the outside looking in when we arrive at the banquet...
- Saying yes to the call to holiness, to discipleship is only the first step. Our yes must include a commitment to conversion. To continue the parable our commitment to follow Jesus means we dress not for where we are but for where we want to be.

- Following Jesus means we need to shed the garments of greed and envy. Being a disciple of Jesus means we must take off the clothing of selfishness and greed. Committing ourselves to the path to holiness, the path to extraordinariness means stripping off the vestments of anger, revenge, hatred, impatience, lust, and arrogance. Even if we are dedicated to following Jesus, we are reluctant to get rid of garments that seem to fit well and are comfortable.
- But our yes to Jesus means that we will have to put on some new clothing. Clothing that at first may be very uncomfortable. We will need to put on humility and generosity that always puts others especially those most in need, first. We will need to put on the clothing of mercy and forgiveness becoming peacemakers in the midst of a violent world. We will need to put on the clothing of chastity and patience recalling, respecting and protecting the dignity of every person. Over all this we must put on love, love that is unconditional, love that seeks the best for the other, love that not only points the way to holiness and happiness but humbly leads others to the banquet.
- Jesus does indeed desire to save us all...However, many are called but few are chosen...Many know the Way but follow other paths...Many say yes to the invitation but only on their terms... dressing for where they are rather than for where they are called to be. Perhaps it would be wise if each of us this week spent 10 minutes pondering the question of whether we are ready to go to the banquet. To ask ourselves if we are wearing clothing that reveals our gratitude, our humility, our hope, our love. Perhaps as we begin to bring out the wardrobe for the upcoming season it would be a good idea for us to commit to updating our spiritual wardrobe as well.
- The invitation has been sent...are we ready to accept, are we ready to be dress for where we want to be...are we ready to be welcomed to the mountain of the Lord, the banquet of the Lord where every hope is fulfilled, every belief made true, and life made eternal...Are we ready?
- " I can do all things in Him who strengthens me."