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Tuesday's Gospel: Invited to the Banquet

Gospel for Tuesday in the 31st
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 14:15-24*)

When one of those who sat at table with Jesus heard this, he said to him, “Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!”

But Jesus said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come;

for all is now ready.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.’ And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’”

Commentary

Our Lord uses the image of the banquet in this parable to continue describing the Kingdom of God, now focusing on those who have been invited. The word “Church” in fact means “convocation” and sums up the universal call to salvation addressed by God to all men and women.

The parable tells us that when the banquet is ready, those invited begin to make excuses not to come. The three excuses given seem quite reasonable, and none reflects a direct rejection of the invitation. That is why it may surprise us that the householder – God – is so irritated by the denials and decides to fill his banquet with the less fortunate in society. Throughout human history we see how God’s

initiative in the salvation of mankind is free. But how can we receive the ticket needed to enter the banquet? By recognizing what we are: sinners, in need of forgiveness; sick, in need of healing; poor, in need of Someone who can fill our hearts with his Love.

[1]

Recognizing our vulnerability and dependence as created beings will enable us to approach the master of the banquet with simplicity and ask him to let us enter, because on our own we don't have the remedy for our errors, nor the medicine that heals our wounds, nor the food that satisfies us or the drink that quenches our thirst.

Once we know we are welcomed by the master, the need arises naturally – from within! – to tell others what has happened to us and where we have been invited. Therefore the true meaning of “compel people to come

in” (v. 23) in the parable should not be understood as physical or moral violence towards others, but as a force that is contagious and attracts others, imbuing them with the desire to share in the great good fortune that we, without deserving it, have been invited to.

^[1] Cf. Francis, Homily, 7 November 2017.

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