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Thursday's Gospel: Marriage Feast of the Lamb

Gospel for Thursday in the 20th
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 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.”

Commentary

Jesus’ parables contain inexhaustible riches and we cannot fail to apply any of them to ourselves. No one can say: “this parable has nothing to do with me.” Each one is a direct invitation from our Lord to reflect on the state of our own soul.

The parable that we find in today’s Gospel allows for many interpretations, but here we can focus on a small detail: the fact that the king is preparing a banquet to celebrate his son’s wedding. Who is

this King? God the Father. And who is the Son? Clearly, it is Christ. And who is the bride? The Church.

Therefore, what is this banquet? The Holy Mass.

Every day, just before Communion, we hear the priest say: *Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.* These words are a combination of what Saint John the Baptist said to his disciples (cf. *Jn* 1:29) and what is proclaimed near the end of the book of Revelations: “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (*Rev* 19:9).

Let us not lose sight of the fact that our Lord is telling this parable to the high priests and elders of the people, that is, to those considered pious. So it is very important that those of us who try to take part in Mass each day

feel challenged by these words of Jesus. Our Lord expects us to attend Mass with the proper dispositions.

If we make a sincere examination of conscience, we will realize that sometimes we are present at the Mass only with our body and that our thoughts are elsewhere: they “went off, one to his farm, another to his business.” While being present at the Marriage of the Lamb, so often we are thinking about our own trivial concerns.

Or we can also be like that man without the proper wedding garment, either because our external appearance seems to show that we don’t give it the importance it has, or because we have not prepared our soul properly, through daily prayer and frequent confession.

In any case, today’s Gospel is a wonderful opportunity to rediscover that the Eucharist is *pignus vitae*

eternae: the pledge – the guarantee – of eternal life. Taking part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice with the proper dispositions, realizing it is Heaven on earth, will open the doors of Eternity to us.

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