

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(Missale Romanum, 1962)

“RESPONDING FULLY TO GOD’S INVITATION”

The Parable of the Marriage Feast (Mt. 22:1-14) ‘outlines the sad story – so true even today – of human ingratitude, which rejects God’s mercy, and is indifferent to His gifts and invitations.’ⁱ

Since the creation of Adam and Eve, God has offered a number of covenants with men so as to draw them into his inner life. But, as human history shows, a great number of individuals have rejected God’s most generous invitation to be part of ‘His-story’.

‘The Parable of the Marriage Feast is an allegory of salvation history culminating in Jesus [Christ]. The **king** is God (22:2) who prepares a heavenly banquet for his son (22:2). The **servants** are OT prophets (22:3) called to summon Israel. Because some of the **invited** guests ignored the prophets and others **killed** them (22:6), God will destroy their city, Jerusalem, and send other **servants** as apostles (22:8) to invite Gentiles, **bad** and **good** (22:10), to the celebration.’ⁱⁱ

As we reflect on the Parable of the Wedding Feast, we should look into the depth of our own souls and consider in what ways we have accepted (or rejected) God’s invitation. Have we responded well? Or have we grown lukewarm in responding to God’s call? Do we have a divided heart?

A true response to God's invitation to his inner life is to give our complete assent to him: a sincere and profound commitment of our whole soul. This relates to the first Commandment: 'I am and Lord your God, you shall have no idols before me.' We tend to be idolatrous: we are so easily drawn to created realities, and we fail to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength.

Today's parable tells us of a man who did not refuse God's invitation, 'but who accepted it in an unworthy manner, appearing at the marriage feast without the wedding garment. This is a figure of those who respond to Our Lord's invitation in a material way only, without embracing in heart and soul, and without striving, by their works, to live in a manner worthy of their vocation. Such souls seriously endanger their salvation, for God will not be mocked. He cannot be deceived by appearances; no uniform or external decorations can conceal from Him the true state of a soul.'ⁱⁱⁱ

St. Paul invites us to 'put on that new man who has been created in the image of God.' May our 'Yes!' to God be authentic! May our response to God be shown, not only in what we say, but in what we do! All is prepared. Come to the Wedding Feast!

ⁱ Fr. Gabriel of St Mary Magdalen, *DIVINE INTIMACY*, 1996, TAN Books, Inc., Rockford, IL, p. 968

ⁱⁱ Commentary on Mt 22:1-14 taken from the *IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE*, 2010, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, p. 46

ⁱⁱⁱ *DIVINE INTIMACY*, p. 969