

**Readings Isaiah 25: 6-10; Phillipians 4: 12-14, 19-20; Matthew 22: 1-14**



**Fr Michael says:**

### **The Wedding Feast**

The richness of the Jewish Tradition is again seen in this powerful Parable, where the banquet is taken as the fullness of life that God wants to give, not just to Israel, but to everyone. There are two versions of the story, an editor has added in another message, on top of the original one, which makes the point that those to whom the invitations were sent first, rejected them and so they have been replaced by others: this refers to the Jews and Gentiles once more. The details of the destruction of the city were added later, after the destruction of Jerusalem. The episode with the wedding garment is a later addition too, but it seems to give a contrary message to the first and so would be better omitted. If we reflect upon it however, it was expected that people make an effort to wear something special for the feast; the one who does not is like a person who has no basic desire to change and so is unfruitful. The same punishment will be given to those who are called later (the Christians), we are responsible! God is our strength, as St Paul tells us in the Second Reading.

If we ever give a party, we can expect three types of response: those who accept – but there are varying degrees of acceptance, from wholehearted to grudging. There will be those who decline, we may be saddened by them, but at least we know where we are with them! Again there are various reasons for doing this. It is the third response, or lack of it, which creates the problem – it is worse than a refusal: we just do not know where we are – if we contact them, we will get that empty feeling, because they will say: “Oh, I meant to get back to you but...”

God invites us all – He does not insist on a response, He respects our freedom! Often we do not know what we want or even what is good for us. What we are seeking and what deep down we really value and want, are not always the same thing! Perhaps we are so busy, our lives are so full, that God has great difficulty in getting through to us. Only He knows what is truly best for us, like parents with their children, so is He with us. What is He calling us to do? He wants us to live a deeper and more authentic life here in earth; He calls us to intimacy with Himself; He is calling us to be in community with others and at the end of our lives will call us into the fullness of eternal life

## Homily 28<sup>TH</sup> Sunday of the year A 2014



**Fr. Tom says:**

“Invitations galore!”

There are two significant elements that will dictate whether your life is successful and happy or not. The first is gratitude and the second is to make the most of the invitations you receive. And, if you pause for a while and reflect on each day as it passes, you will come to realise that every day is full to overflowing with invitations. Gratitude is essential if you want to make the most of the invitations that come your way. The grateful person sees everything as a gift from God, every situation, however challenging or disruptive, is seen as an opportunity and that there always something positive to be gleaned from any situation, however dire. We know that this is true of God for, when God saw the way we treated his Son putting him through the most terrible of deaths, God changed it into life, not just for his Son but for all of us. However badly we may mess up our lives, God believes and tries everything to help us turn it all around into a positive and fulfilling life. But we have to accept God’s invitation.

One of our major difficulties is that God believes in the good person that we are much more than we do ourselves. This week we celebrated the feast of Blessed John Henry Newman whose motto “Cor ad cor loquitur” – ‘Hearts speak to heart’. This implies that prayer is more about a communication of hearts than the string of words we use or the spiritual mind games we perform - God’s heart communicating to our heart and vice versa. It is rather appropriate that the story Jesus tells us this week is about a marriage feast which is brought about by the two hearts of those to be married. It also tells us that it is through God’s heart that our hearts are linked to each other – no wonder we have so much for which to be thankful. I grew up in a home where the picture of the Sacred Heart hung over our fire-place at home. Every day I was reminded of God’s love for me, for us. It was positive, reassuring and grounding – I can still see the picture in my mind’s eye today.

Another insight offered by the story is that true love spills over into the lives of others. The couple getting married want to share their joy with their friends and loved ones. This is their way of expressing their gratitude for the friendship and love they have received. What better way, therefore, for God to show his abundant love for us! He wants to share his love and joy with us in the best way possible.

Note that the tenants did not just refuse to come to the feast they refused the love that was being offered to them putting themselves first. In fact they positively acted against and sought to destroy that love with the result that their refusal inevitably leads to exclusion, sadness and death. God invites us to life and the best life has to offer. There is no middle ground. So, will you accept the invitation?