God Invites You to Celebrate His Love

I was forced to kiss my Aunt Loretta when I was a child. She was nearly 100 and could be a little cranky. I was scared of her! But I was made to kiss her!

I had another aunt who was beautiful, kind, and loving. I loved playing with her and sitting on her lap.

I was forced to respect my aunts, which is good.

We cannot be forced to love – that has to come from inside. We have to want to love.

Catholic parents are right to take their children to church, to be respectful. However, parents shouldn't force children to love.

You can force someone to show affection, but you cannot force someone to love.

I and we need to make celebrating God's love attractive.

Mass should be attractive. Celebrating God's love should be attractive. Not like we're being forced to kiss aunt Loretta!

This is the message of today's Gospel: you are invited to celebrate God's love.

Jesus tells a story about a king who prepares a wedding banquet for his son.

God invites all people to his banquet.

Mass is supposed to be like this banquet. God feeds you with his love through Jesus.

God doesn't expect you to earn his love. He has prepared the feast for you. Just as Jesus won salvation for you through his death and resurrection, you simply have to receive this gift gratefully.

The good and the bad

Jesus says that the servants gathered everyone they found, “both bad and good”.

Everyone is welcome at God's banquet, whether good or bad. It's like the Eucharist: you may have done something wrong this week, but you are still invited to receive God's love.

If you need to get something serious off your chest, go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. God is always ready to forgive you. The Eucharist, too, is a sign and source of forgiveness and reconciliation with Jesus and one another.

You don't have to be perfect to come to Mass. You come because you need God's love and mercy.

Pope Francis said that the church is not a museum to display perfect people. But a hospital for the wounded.

The wedding garment

It may sound harsh that the king throws the man out, into the darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The wedding garment was a sign of entering into the joy of the wedding banquet. As a Christian it means celebrating being clothed in Christ and living a transformed life in the Holy Spirit.

The man is invited to the banquet, but he doesn't appear to embrace the celebration. Even when the king asks him a question, he doesn't respond.

The warning is that we can receive God's invitation without truly responding to it and having a conversion of life.

How might God be inviting you to change?

God invites you to celebrate his love. Will you choose to celebrate?

Jesus concludes: “Many are called, but few are chosen.”

Everyone is invited to celebrate God's love, but we still have to respond. God doesn't force us to celebrate his love. We have to choose to receive it.

So, will you put on your wedding garment? Will you receive God's love, allow the Holy Spirit to transform you and celebrate the gift of new life in Jesus?

Similarly, how might you and I make Mass even more of a celebration of God's love?

Think again about my Aunt Loretta. I could be forced to kiss her, but nobody could force me to love her.

God doesn't want us to be here simply because we feel we have to be. He invites us because he loves us.

God invites you to celebrate his love.

Will you receive it? Will you choose to celebrate it?

Prayer

Imagine Jesus here, looking at you with love.

Father, thank you for inviting me into a relationship with you through Jesus.

Jesus, you offer me a wedding garment to put on, so that I can celebrate God's unconditional love for me.

I choose to put it on and celebrate your love, even in this challenge I'm facing now.

Come into my heart now and fill me with your love and joy!

Help me to celebrate the Good News of God's love revealed in you.

For the revitalisation of the Church and the renewal of the world.

In Jesus' name. Amen!