

28<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time Year A

October 11-12, 2014

Readings: Isaiah 25: 6-10; Phil. 4:12-14, 19-20; Matt. 22:1-10

Whenever I begin to look at my mail, there are some things that immediately become evident before even opening the envelope. I have developed a routine over these many years, though granted it is all changing because of electronic mail. I separate out the junk mail, the third class from the first class mail with a postage stamp. Then I further separate the typed letters from those machine produced. And then finally, I separate out the handwritten addressed letters. Perhaps you can see a pattern- from the least personal to the most personal. And then I can proceed to open whichever pile I feel like on a given day.

Occasionally, I receive formal invitations- usually banquets of some type or weddings. The ones that come with an envelope inside of an envelope are particularly noteworthy and stand out- quite intentionally so. It is a signal that what is inside is extremely important- at least that is how I perceive it to be. Our Gospel speaks today of God's invitation to us, and it is likened to a wedding banquet. Weddings are festive occasions when young and old alike celebrate together, visiting with relatives and friends.

In today's Gospel, we see another side. Not all those who receive the invitation are responding. And that is not all. Sometimes, people try to enter when not even invited. That person was noticed right away. What is particularly disturbing about the Gospel is the fact that those who "crash" the party are treated so harshly. Jesus says that some of those who were invited are unfit to come.

We are called to do much more than merely show up at the banquet of life. We are called to participate fully in the banquet. At a minimum, this includes observing what we call the Precepts of the

Church, the basic duties of a Catholic Christian. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* lists five precepts of the Church.<sup>1</sup> Additional precepts have been listed according to custom, as the number is not defined precisely. Note that the Precepts of the Church focus on *external behavior*. Our *interior attitudes* ought to support and animate these activities. If not, they lose their essential meaning.

**I. To attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and resting from servile works.**

Sunday is a day of rest; it ought to be different, it ought to feel different from other days. When we build our weekend around Mass, as opposed to the other way around whereby we try to fit it in, we protect the sacred character of the day.

**II. To confess our sins to a priest, at least once a year.**

Here at the Cathedral, we offer confessions six days per week, and for a healthy amount of time. It is one of the most important ministries of this parish and it is open to people from all over.

**III. To receive Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist at least once a year during Easter Season.**

Again, this is a minimum and hearkens back to the days when people were extremely cautious about receiving Communion. It is the one precept that appears somewhat puzzling to people today. However, we do want to respect the proper dispositions necessary upon all of us to receive Holy Communion.

**IV. To observe the days of abstinence and fasting established by the Church.**

Friday remains a day of penance in the Church in honor of our Lord. There are many ways to observe this: foregoing desserts, abstaining from meat each and every Friday for Respect Life, saying

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<sup>1</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. # 2041-2043,

extra prayers including the Divine Mercy Chaplet, etc. Protecting the character of Friday can only help us to appreciate the sacrifice of the Cross more fully.

**V. To help provide for the Needs of the Church.**

I remain grateful for people's stewardship of this parish. Our people need to know that we are being good stewards of their generosity, not spending extravagantly, but rather being prudent and judicious. I am confident that this is case, and yet our needs remain many, especially for the care of the people and of this building.

**VI. To obey the laws of the Church concerning Matrimony.**

Many more people are choosing to be married outside of the Church, and the necessity of a Church wedding is being lost upon many. Marriage preparation in the Church includes at least a half a dozen meetings, as we take time to adequately prepare the couple for the sacrament. It requires a commitment on the part of the couple, and we need to educate our children at a young age to see the value of a sacramental marriage.

**VII. To participate in the Church's mission of Evangelization of Souls (Missionary Spirit of the Church)**

Next week is World Mission Sunday. There are worthy initiatives locally as well, all aimed at spreading the Good News, and ensuring that people have access to the Gospel message. This is the mandate of Jesus- to spread the Good News to all ends of the earth.

God judges the heart, not by mere appearance. He knows our heart. But let us take some time to reflect upon the incredible invitation to be part of the Church, to be invited to witness to the joy of the Gospel. This is one invitation that we never want to set aside.