

Tuesday of the Thirty-first Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 14:15-24): One of those at table with Jesus said to him, "Blessed is the one who will dine in the Kingdom of God." He replied to him, "A man gave a great dinner to which he invited many. When the time for the dinner came, he dispatched his servant to say to those invited, 'Come, everything is now ready.' But one by one, they all began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, 'I have purchased a field and must go to examine it; I ask you, consider me excused.' And another said, 'I have purchased five yoke of oxen and am on my way to evaluate them; I ask you, consider me excused.' And another said, 'I have just married a woman, and therefore I cannot come.'

The servant went and reported this to his master. Then the master of the house in a rage commanded his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame.' The servant reported, 'Sir, your orders have been carried out and still there is room.' The master then ordered the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedgerows and make people come in that my home may be filled. For, I tell you, none of those men who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

"Go out to the highways and hedgerows and make people come in that my home may be filled"

Fr. Joan COSTA i Bou
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, the Lord offers us an image of eternity represented by a banquet. The banquet denotes the place where the family and friends gather together to celebrate and enjoy the company, the conversation and the friendship, sitting around the same table. This image speaks of our intimacy with God as Trinity and the joy we will find in the Promised Land. He has made everything for us and He calls us in for “everything is now ready” (Lk 14:17). He wants us with him; He wants all men and women by His side, each one of us.

We must, however, yearn to go. And, despite we know quite well that Heaven is where we can be at our best, where we should stay eternally, exceeding the noblest human ambitions —“What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1Cor 2:9) and, therefore, without any possible comparison—, we are, all the same, capable of refusing the divine invitation missing forever the best offering God could ever make us: to share His home, his table, his intimacy, forever and ever. What a responsibility!

Unfortunately, we are capable of swapping God for practically anything. Some, as we read in today's Gospel, for a piece of land; others, for some yoke of oxen. And you and I, what are we willing to trade He, who is our God, and his invitation, for? There are those that out of laziness, sloppiness, convenience, refrain from fulfilling their duties of love towards God: is God so unworthy we can replace Him with anything? Let our response to the divine offering be always a yes, full of gratitude and admiration.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“The Lord in his clemency invites everyone, but it is our cowardice or our misguidance that separates us.” (Saint Ambrose of Milan)

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“God does not fail. Today too, he will find new ways to call men, and he wants to have us with

him as his messengers and servants.” (Benedict XVI)

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“By his Revelation, ‘the invisible God, from the fullness of his love, addresses men as his friends, and moves among them, in order to invite and receive them into his own company’ (Vatican II). The adequate response to this invitation is faith.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 142)