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 is the place where family and friends gather together, enjoying one another's company, conversation, and friendship around the same table. This image speaks to us of intimacy with the Triune God and of the joy we will find in the dwelling of heaven. Everything has been prepared for us, and He calls us because "everything is now ready" (Lk 14:17). He wants us with Him; He wants all men and women of the world by His side—each one of us.

However, we must also want to go. And even though we know that it is where we will be happiest—for heaven is our eternal home, surpassing all the noblest human aspirations, nothing can compare to it: "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” (1 Cor 2:9). Yet, we are still capable of rejecting God’s invitation and losing forever the greatest gift He could offer us: to share in His home, His table, His intimacy for all eternity. What a tremendous responsibility!

Sadly, we are capable of trading God for almost anything. Some, as we read in today’s Gospel, for a field; others, for a pair of oxen. And you and I—what are we willing to trade God and His invitation for? There are those who, out of laziness, negligence, or comfort, fail to fulfill their duties of love toward God. Is God worth so little that we replace Him with anything else? May our response to His divine invitation always be a “yes,” full of gratitude and wonder.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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

- “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)

- “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, nº 142)