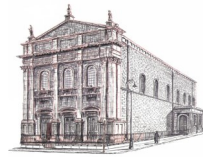




PARISH OF ST. AGATHA
10TH/11TH OCTOBER 2020



Fr. Brendan Kealy Adm.: 087 9117575 Office:
 Tel:018554078, Mr John Kelly: Chairperson Parish Pastoral Council
Jesus I Trust in You E-mail : office@stagathasparish.ie Website: www.stagathasparish.ie

POPE FRANCIS: GOD PREPARES HIS WEDDING BANQUET FOR EVERYONE

Pope Francis says it is not enough to accept the invitation to the Lord's wedding banquet, it also entails being "open to a journey of conversion, which changes the heart." The Pope reflected on God's plan of salvation for humanity. In the day's Gospel reading (Mt 22:1-14), Jesus recounts a parable in which a king hosts a marriage feast for his son.

GENEROSITY VS SELFISHNESS

Pope Francis said the parable is an image of the Father's generosity and extravagant love for humanity. However, he said, many of the originally-invited guests refuse to show up for the feast. "So often we too put our interests and material things ahead of the Lord who calls us." The king, continued the Pope, persists in his desire to share the gifts of his kingdom, ordering his servants to go to the "limits of the roads" to invite whomever they find. "This is how God reacts: when He is rejected, rather than giving up, He starts over and asks that all those found at the thoroughfares be called, excluding no one."

PREACHING IN THE PERIPHERIES [BEYOND LIMITS]

Pope Francis went on to reflect on the term the evangelist Matthew uses for the "limits of the roads". He said the Greek phrase indicates "those points at which the city streets end and the paths begin that lead to the area of the countryside, outside the residential area, where life is precarious." It is precisely these people on the peripheries who are excluded from society, added the Pope, which the king invites to his banquet. "The Church is called to reach the daily thoroughfares, that is, the geographic and existential peripheries of humanity, those places at the margins, those situations in which those who have set up camp are found where and hopeless remnants of humanity live."

OPEN HEARTS AND COMMUNITIES

The Holy Father said we are called to not rest on our laurels in the task of evangelisation and charity. Rather, we must open the doors of our hearts and communities to share the Gospel with everyone, even those on the margins of society. God, he said, "prepares His banquet for everyone: the just and sinners, good and bad, intelligent and uneducated."

ACCEPTING OUR GARMENT OF MERCY

But, said Pope Francis, Jesus imposes one condition on those attending the feast: they must wear the wedding garment which they received upon entering the banquet hall. In Jesus' parable, the king sees one man who had refused to wear the garment and has him thrown outside. "The wedding garment," said the Pope, "symbolises the mercy that God freely gives us... It is not enough to accept the invitation to follow the Lord; one must be open to a journey of conversion, which changes the heart." God, he added, constantly offers us a "garment of mercy", which is grace. "And it demands to be welcomed with astonishment and joy."

GOING BEYOND OUR NARROW VIEWS

Finally, Pope Francis prayed that the Blessed Virgin Mary might help us to emerge "from our frameworks and from our narrow views, proclaiming to everyone that the Lord invites us to his banquet, in order to offer us his saving grace." (Devin Watkins, Vatican News)

WEAR THE WEDDING GARMENT OF FAITH, BELIEF AND REPENTANCE

In today's Gospel (Matt 22:1-14), we are identified as a Family of Christians, invited by God, to the Wedding-Banquet of His Son and our brother Jesus in Heaven. But not all in the Family are interested in going, simply because they don't BELIEVE and not bothered to get ready. The anticipated Union with God in Heaven, is often portrayed as a Marriage Supper (Rev 19:6-8). Those on earth, who put on the Garments of God's Will, are found worthy to enter. The man who was found without the proper wedding clothes, is not just thrown out of the Banquet, but is **bound hand and foot**, and **cast into darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth**.

RESPOND BY OUR FAITH IN ACTION

This is the Judgment scene that so many Christians foolishly refuse to believe exists. It is also the image of the Archangel Lucifer been thrown out of Heaven and cast into the Darkness of Hell forever. Jesus addresses him as **friend**, in the same way He addressed Judas, because. Jesus does not fallout with us, we, the sinner, fall out with Him. The Banquet celebration will include the unexpected, in the poor and the needy, who through their **hardships** (Phil 4: 12-20), never lost faith. The choice not to wear the Garment of Faith on earth, is to choose Eternal Death, where there is eternal **weeping**. We respond to the Invitation through Faith.

MASS IS A FORETASTE OF THE HEAVENLY BANQUET

Mass on earth allows us to participate in the Heavenly Liturgy, which celebrates the Eternal Covenant or Eternal Marriage, between God and us. This Union is made visible in the Person Of Christ. To not attend Mass (even online), is to divorce ourselves from our Bride, who is our Church on earth. To refuse the invitation of Holy Communion with Jesus on earth, will result in our excommunication from Him in *the Life of the World to come*. We cannot invite ourselves in, but be chosen for an invitation, with the condition to dress appropriately.

WEAR THE EARTHLY GARMENT OF REPENTANCE

So, before being fitted with the Heavenly Garment of Eternal Divinity, we must first wear the earthly garment of Humility and Repentance for our sins. To seek God's Divine Mercy in Confession. During the earthly Wedding Banquet of the Mass, at the Offertory, the Priest places a drop of water into the Chalice, which holds the wine. This small **undressed drop of water** represents all of humanity. During the Consecration of the Mass, the wine is miraculously transfigured into the Blood and Body of Christ. The drop of water (us), is also transformed and now shares in the Divine Body of Jesus in the Chalice. Like the Wedding Feast at Cana and all Marriage Ceremonies, the two are spiritually transformed and become one.

THE DROP OF WATER (US), BECOMES CLOTHED IN CHRIST'S FLESH

Later, in the Mass, and before praying to the **Lamb of God** for Divine Mercy and Peace, the Priest breaks a small piece of the Eucharistic Flesh and places it in the Chalice. This reminds us that our nakedness, symbolised by the Drop of Water, if found worthy, will be clothed in the Eucharistic Flesh of Christ, which is the Wedding Garment suitable for Heaven. This moment of the Mass signifies our entry into Heaven, if clothed in the Body of Christ, who fed us of Himself, while on earth. We become WHO we ate. In doing this, the Priest prays the following prayer: **May this mingling of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, bring Eternal Life to us who receive it**. Every Funeral Mass includes the belief that if we have died with Christ in faith, then we will rise with Him and **He will change our mortal bodies, to conform with His Glorified Body. When the Lord appears, we shall be like Him**.

MASS IS A TIME TO BE CHANGED, NOT TO BE ENTERTAINED

In every Mass, we are being slowly changed into the Body of Christ. Satan creates many distractions during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, so that many in the congregation, depart completely unchanged. The Mass is not a time to be entertained, but a time to be changed. The more we practice Love and Mercy, the more we become the Marriage. The refusal to accept this offer of Eternal Grace, leaves another invitation open to those who chose to kill the Word of God. Regrettably, many souls blindly accept Satan's invitation to join him in Hell. A place that they never believed existed. Believing that Hell exists, motivates us to avoid it. Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, in Fatima (1917), came, **dressed in white, shining brighter than the sun**, warned us that Hell exists. Death is a doorway we will all go through. Every new day allow Mary our Mother, to spiritually dress us in a New Grace, to keep us safe and prepare us for eternal Life. God bless, Fr. Brendan.