

Since I began preaching, I've been in the habit of sending us all out with weekly homework. So, now is the test. Are you ready? Here's the question:

Who wants to go to heaven? C'mon, raise your hand. Who wants to go to heaven?

OK. Put your hands down.

Now, for the next question:

Who wants to go to heaven RIGHT NOW?

Today we hear a parable in the Gospel about a king who gives a wedding banquet. And he invites guests, none of whom came.

This banquet is mirrored in the first reading, where the prophet Isaiah talks about the Messianic banquet at the end of time; and in the psalm response, the 23rd psalm where a banquet is prepared for us in the sight of our foes.

So, what does this have to do with us?

At baptism, we all received our invitation to the banquet in heaven. That is our Messianic wedding banquet, thrown by God the Father for his Son Jesus Christ. And we the Church are the bride of Christ. And not only we have all received an invitation to the eternal banquet in heaven, but as the prayers at baptism remind us we are "clothed in Christ."

And so, we have all received our invitation, and we have received our wedding garment – both of them at Baptism. And throughout our lives, we get promptings, where we make a choice – do we continue on our way to the eternal banquet? Or do we let other things get in the way?

For all of us, who received this invitation at baptism, we can be distracted from the eternal banquet. But despite the distractions, God calls each one of us – saints and sinners alike – to his eternal banquet. He has given us the grace in the sacraments that allows us to come to the banquet and to be clothed in Christ.

But sometimes, like the invited guests in the parable, we may be distracted from that grace. In some ways, we may ignore God's grace. Worse still is when we oppose and fight the graces that our poured out upon us, or else we ridicule the idea that God's grace can be an active part of our lives. And God forbid that we should go so far as to kill the life of grace within us.

So let us reflect on our own disposition – let us ask God to shine a light on the places and times in our lives where we do not "put on Christ" or even where we may "take off Christ." Let pray that we can receive the grace to bring Christ into those places and times in our lives where we may exclude him; and accept the graces God so abundantly pours out on us; engaging those graces in our daily lives, so that we can one day be welcomed into the eternal banquet, clothed in Christ, when we hear God's call that "all is prepared ... everything is ready."