

11. October 2020

“The Wedding Dress”

Mt 22,1-14

Jesus began to speak to them in parables once again, 'The kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come. Next he sent some more servants with the words, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, my banquet is all prepared, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, everything is ready. Come to the wedding." But they were not interested: one went off to his farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his servants, maltreated them and killed them. The king was furious. He despatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, go to the main crossroads and invite everyone you can find to come to the wedding." So these servants went out onto the roads and collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests. When the king came in to look at the guests he noticed one man who was not wearing a wedding garment, and said to him, "How did you get in here, my friend, without a wedding garment?" And the man was silent. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot and throw him into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth." For many are invited but not all are chosen.'

If we look at the text in its biblical context, we can first of all interpret it as referring to the people of Israel: they were in particular the invited guests who were to come to the wedding. When the Father sends his Son to lead humanity home to him, then the time of joy and celebration, the time of fullness has come!

In Mark 2:19 Jesus says: *"Surely the bridegroom's attendants cannot fast while the bridegroom is still with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast."*

But we hear that the invited guests do not come, the Jews as a people did not follow the invitation of the Lord, not even when the apostles stayed among them and assured them once again, as God's special love, that they are invited to this wedding, which the Son of God, who is also a son of Israel, wants to celebrate! But when the invitation was rejected and even those who had been sent out as

messengers were murdered, the time had come to invite the nations to this wedding, so that the wedding hall would be filled.

So they came and come everywhere to be led by Jesus into the Kingdom of his Father.

But let us see one condition: Even if the invitation applies to everyone, good and evil, in order to take part in this wedding, a wedding garment is needed. This is what Jesus offers us by forgiving our sins and washing us in His blood.

To be able to celebrate this wedding, it is necessary to accept God's invitation to know his love, to accept the gift of salvation and to serve God and mankind in a life of sincere conversion.

We human beings all live by the mercy of God. But God's mercy does not mean, as the Gospel shows us today, that we can remain as we were when God invited us. Today, even within the church, we often find ourselves confronted with a false idea of mercy, which no longer wants to demand a proper conversion from people, possibly even trivialising sin. This leads astray and also paralyses the power of decision to orient one's life entirely according to the will of God!

But if we follow the will of God and in his mercy trying to live a life of conversion, then we have put on the wedding dress and our vocation has become a choice!