



Archdiocese of San Antonio  
Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller



28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
October 12, 2014

For the last several Sundays we have been hearing parables that speak of the Kingdom being taken away from those who did not open their hearts to the Gospel and given to the sinners and those who were not supposed to be worthy. This Sunday is no different. Jesus tells this Parable of the Wedding Feast. In it, the guests invited by the King either ignored his invitation or beat and even killed the messengers he sent. So, the King destroyed those unfaithful servants, and instead called the lowly from across the land to come to the feast. This is really good news for us, because we are those lowly ones.

We rejoice at this parable because it tells of our calling to the Wedding Banquet of Heaven. We are the ones the messengers found roaming in the streets, “bad and good alike.” We do not deserve to be at the feast, but here we are! We have been gathered into God’s great banquet hall and called to share in his life, simply because he loves us and extended his grace to us. “On this mountain the Lord of hosts will provide for all peoples a feast of rich food and choice wines, juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines. On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the web that is woven over all nations; he will destroy death forever. The Lord God will wipe away the tears from every face; the reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the Lord has spoken” (Is). So, come my brothers and sisters, come to the King and receive his love without price, without title or lofty position. We all stand as equals in the

sight of God, who loves us and shares his grace with us abundantly. We rejoice to “live in the house of the Lord all the days of our life” (Ps). Yes, we like this parable! Well, at least we like it until we get to those last 4 verses:

“When the king came in to meet the guests, he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment. The king said to him, 'My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?' But he was reduced to silence. Then the king said to his attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.' Many are invited, but few are chosen.”

This seems so harsh after the beautiful image of God welcoming us all in with open arms to his great Banquet. What does it mean? Why would God be so harsh to someone he loves? The key lies in the meaning of the “wedding garment.” This man came to the feast, but was not prepared to be there. He was not prepared for the reality of that feast. This is the lesson we must take with us today. Are we prepared to be here?

The Kingdom of God is a beautiful gift, but there is necessarily a responsibility that comes from receiving this gift. In the words of our Holy Father, Pope Francis: “In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 120). So, when we were baptized, we were clothed in white – this was the symbol of our wedding garment. That garment is the dignity of our Christian lives, the great gift and responsibility of personally working in the Church to bring others to Christ. We must live as missionary disciples; it is not optional. If we want to be members of the Kingdom of God, we must be missionary disciples.

It is not enough just to rejoice in the Lord. Rejoicing in the Lord is a very good thing – it's why we are here this morning. But we must leave this place and go out to share our love of God and the joy of the Gospel to everyone in our lives! Think of all the people you interact with every day. Do they see Christ in every action you take, in every word you speak, in every look on your face? It does not matter the circumstance; we can and should live with the joy of God shining in our lives, just like St. Paul demonstrates in the letter to the Philippians. This is the challenge of the parable today. We are to always live the life we promised to live when we were clothed in the dignity of our wedding garment at baptism. We do not draw people to Christ by force or by clever tricks, but rather by attraction! Why are you here this morning? It is because you love Jesus! Then show that love to everyone, even in the tiny little tasks we perform every day. Are we joyful and attracting to other people? We should be. We have a share in the Banquet of Heaven! Let the dignity of your wedding garment shine forth every day my friends. It is not just Pope Francis' job, or Archbishop Gustavo's job, or Fr. Tony's job, it is the job for all of us. It is our responsibility and our great, great privilege. It is the ONLY way to live in the Kingdom of God.

Rejoice in the invitation today, sisters and brothers. We have been called to true life in Christ. But also take seriously the call of our wedding garment, our baptismal garment. The Holy Spirit has filled us through Baptism and Confirmation, we have been fed the body and blood of the Son at the Banquet, and we are called to go forth to proclaim the Gospel to the glory of God the Father. It is not always easy to be missionary disciples, but we "can do all things in him who strengthens us" (Phil). May Mary, the Star of the New Evangelization "sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One" (Lumen Fidei), and help us to share that joy with everyone we meet.