



Thursday 19th August 2021
20th Week in Ordinary Time Year 1

Gospel

Mt 22:1-14

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Go out and find whomever you can, and invite them to the wedding.

Jesus began to speak to the chief priests and the elders of the people in parables. '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. "Tell those who have been invited" he said "that I have my banquet 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 dispatched 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 crossroads in the town and invite everyone you can find 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 out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'

Reflection By Fr John Lovell

The Gospels were written down many decades after Our Lord's ministry on Earth took place. The Gospel according to Matthew is thought to have been written sometime during the period 75 and 85 AD. Often woven into the evangelists' memories of events and teachings from the life of Jesus, we can find veiled references to events

occurring in and around the early Church as it strove to spread the Good News across the Roman world. In looking at the parable told in today's Gospel we might ask, 'Who is the King?' The answer would have to be: God the Father. Who is the King's Son? Jesus. The wedding feast is the Christian Church's call for people to repent in preparation for the Lord's Second Coming, which was expected to occur at any time. Hence the urgency for those invited to respond to the call without delay. For Matthew, who has been described as the Apostle to the Jews, the reluctance of many Jewish people to accept Jesus as their Messiah and embrace His message must have been excruciating.

When I looked at my New Jerome Biblical Commentary today to shed light on this passage, the part about the dispatching of troops to destroy the unresponsive invited guests and burn their town, was seen as a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman legions in 70 AD.

Since so many of the Chosen People (the Jews) refused to accept God's invitation to His Son's wedding feast, God was sending His envoys to go to the pagans ("go to the crossroads") to bring them to the faith while there is still time. Perhaps the best known of these envoys was St Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles.

As to the man who came in without a wedding garment, I believe the Lord is telling us that mere membership of the Church is not sufficient for salvation. We also need to have the right disposition of heart to take our place in the Kingdom.

Since the Second Coming still hasn't taken place almost 2000 years after Jesus ascended into Heaven, we see that the invitation to His wedding feast is still open. This prompts the question: What can we do to invite more people in our world today to respond to the Lord's call to come to the wedding feast?