

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost 15 October 2017

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”
Mt. 22:14

In today’s Gospel (Mt. 22:1-14), we see the continuation of Jesus’ parables in which He explains how the Kingdom of Heaven is made available to men, but they, for various reasons, do not accept the invitation of God. In today’s parable of the **“Marriage Feast,”** we see how the King gives a marriage feast for his son and invites guests to it. According to Bl. Don Columba Marmion, OSB, this marriage feast by the king is actually the marriage feast of the Son of God who takes upon Himself a human nature. Pope St. Gregory the Great comments on the **“Marriage Feast”**: **“...that the King made a marriage for His Son, in that, by the mystery of the Incarnation, He united the Church to Him. The womb of the Virgin was the nuptial-chamber of that Bridegroom, of whom the psalmist says (Ps. 18:6): ‘He has set His tabernacle in the sun: and He, as a Bridegroom, cometh out of His bride-chamber.’”** (St. Gregory, **Hom.** 38, **in Ev.**), Gueranger, p. 419-20 In the part before today’s Epistle (Eph.4:23-28) St. Paul writes about being faithful to one’s calling: **“...with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit.”** Eph. 4:2-4 The **“bond of peace”** is the absolute requirement for all those who wish to be united to Jesus Christ in **“one body and one Spirit”** in this world in preparation for the heavenly **“marriage feast”** of heaven.

Holiness of union of love in God

In his commentary on today’s Epistle, Dom Prosper Gueranger in his ***The Liturgical Life Vol. 11*** comments on the holiness in Blessed Trinity: **“Let us call to mind how the holiness, which is in God, is His very truth--truth living and harmonious, which is no other than the admirable concert of the Three divine Persons, united in love. We have seen that holiness, as far as it exists in us men, is also union, by infinite love, with the eternal and living Truth. The Word took a Body unto Himself in order to manifest in the Flesh this sanctifying and perfect truth (cf. Jn. 1:14), of which He is the substantial expression ((cf. Heb. 1:3). His Humanity,**

sanctified directly by the plenitude of the divine life and truth, which dwell within Him (cf. Col. 2: 3, 9, 10), became the model, as well as the means, the way, of holiness to every creature ((cf. Jn. 14:6)...In Jesus, as the complement of His Incarnation, Wisdom aspires at uniting with herself all the members, also, of that human race, of which He is the Head (cf. Eph. 1:10), and First-born (cf. Col. 1:15-20); by Him the Holy Ghost, whose sacred fount He is (cf. Jn. 4:14), pours Himself out upon man, whereby to adapt him to his sublime vocation, and to consummate, in infinite love (which is Himself), that union of every creature with the divine Word. Thus it is that we verily partake of that life of God, whose existence and holiness are the knowledge and love of His own Word; thus it is that we are sanctified in truth (cf. Jn. 17:17) by the participation of that very holiness wherewith God is holy by nature.” Gueranger, p. 412

“...and put on the new man which has been created according to God in justice, and holiness of truth.” Eph. 4:23

St. Paul, in urging his followers to put on the new man in truth, shows us that the unifying principle in Jesus Christ for all of His members is the Holy Spirit of truth and love. Dom Gueranger comments on this unifying principle: **“May they all be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, said Jesus to His eternal Father, that they also may be one in us. I have given unto them the glory (that is to say, the holiness) which Thou hast given unto me, that they may be one as we also are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be consummated (that is, be made perfect) in unity.”** (cf. 17:21-28) **...By that sublime prayer, He explained what He had previously been saying: ‘I sanctified Myself for them, that they, also may sanctified in truth.’”** (cf. Jn. 17:19) Gueranger, p.413

“...bond of peace”

In Ephesians, St. Paul exhorts his followers to be faithful to their calling: **“...with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit.”** Eph. 4:2-4 This unity of the Spirit is, according to Dom Gueranger, the principle for all believers: **“It is the crowning of the sublimest vocations in the order of grace as well as the**

foundation and reason of all God's commandments; so truly so, indeed, that, if we are commanded to abstain from lying, and to speak the truth to them that live with us, the motive is that we are members one of another." Gueranger, p. 413-4 This is why St. Paul in today's Epistle tells us: "*Wherefore, put away lying and speak truth each one with his neighbour, because we are members of one another. 'Be angry and sin not.'* (Ps. 4:5); *do not let the sun go down upon your anger: do not give place to the devil. He who was wont to steal, let him steal no longer, but rather let him labour, working with his hands at what is good, that he may have something to share with him who suffers need.*" Eph. 4:25-8 Only those who keep "*the bond of peace*" with one another can belong to Christ and to one another.

Heavenly Marriage Feast

Today's Gospel is similar to the Gospel of the Second Sunday after Pentecost (Lk. 14:16-24) which relates the account of "*The Great Supper*" to which many were invited. St. Matthew's "*Marriage Feast*" is fuller in details than St. Luke's version, and it offers us a revelation of the true aim of the Church. Dom Gueranger, in comparing the two gospels, says: "**The certain man who made a great supper, and invited many, has become the King, who makes a marriage feast for His Son, and, in this marriage, gives us an image of the kingdom of heaven. The world's history, too, has been developing, as we gather from the terms respectively used by the two Evangelists. Those who were first invited, and contented themselves with declining the kindness of the Master of the house, have grown in their impious ingratitude; laying hands on the messengers sent them by the loving kindness of the King, they treat them with contumely, and put them to death! We have seen the merited punishment inflicted on these deicides, by this Man, who was God Himself, the Father of Israel, now become King of the Gentiles: we have seen how He sent his armies to destroy them and burn their city. And now at last, in spite of the refusal of the invited of Juda, in spite of the treacherous opposition put them against the celebration of the nuptials of the Son of God, all things are ready for the marriage, and the banquet-hall is filled with guests.**" Gueranger, p.417

Wedding Garment of Sanctifying Grace

The spiritual meaning of the "*Parable of the Marriage Feast*" contains the need for sanctifying grace to enter the heavenly "*marriage feast*." All have been invited from the highways and crossroads of the land. When the King enters, he notices one without a wedding garment. This wedding garment signifies the need on the part of the soul to have sanctifying grace. In the spiritual sense, the man has not kept the "*bond of peace*" because he has not kept the Commandments and has offended God and his neighbour by his sins; therefore, the king has his hands and feet bound and casts him out into the darkness "*where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*" Mt. 22:13 As we can see from today's parable of the "*Marriage Feast*," "*...many are called, but few are chosen.*" Mt. 22:14 All have the invitation, but not all accept the invitation. It is they who refuse to come either by rejecting Jesus Christ or by refusing to repent after disobeying God's Commandments. We can be assured that we will be chosen for the heavenly "*marriage feast*" if we persevere in "*the bond of peace*" with love of God and our neighbour.

St. Bernard's Prayer in Honour of the Name of Mary

"If you have fallen victim to some heinous crime, if you are overwhelmed by the reproaches of an evil conscience, if you fear being engulfed in the whirlpool of doubt or an abyss of sorrow, think of Mary. Call upon Mary! Let not her name leave your lips; hold it to your heart. You will win her wonderful intercession if you but follow her footsteps. If you imitate her, you will never go astray! If you implore her help, you will never waver. If you keep her in your thoughts, you will never sin. If she assists you, you will never stumble. If she protects you, then never fear. If she guides you, you will never tire; if she befriends you, the attainment of the goal is assured. Make it, then a personal experience of how rightly the Evangelist wrote: '*The Virgin's name was Mary.*'" Lk. 1:27