

II Trinity 2021

Sermon - Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

I St. John 3.13-24 St. Luke 14.16-24

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A parable is a short fictional story based on real-life events. Jesus didn't invent parables...but they are a major part of his teaching method. His parables make a single important point. We get the most out of his parables when we take them at face value...and don't try to over analyze them.

Today's Gospel is the Parable of the Great Feast. The part of the Gospel we don't read today sets the stage. It's the Sabbath and Jesus has been invited to lunch at the home of an important religious leader. He is amused watching other guests push each other out of the way to get the best seats. Jesus seizes the opportunity to give a short lesson in humility and hospitality.

Humility and hospitality are more than being nice to other people. Humility is freedom from arrogance and pride. Hospitality is kindness toward others and is never self-serving. The kind of humility and hospitality Jesus is talking about means a radical change in the disposition of our hearts toward others.

Jesus tells the people sitting at his table it's not a good idea to take the best seats...you might be asked to move. Think how embarrassed you will be. Instead, wait and you might be asked to take a better seat. We should not think of ourselves as better and more important than others at the dinner table.

The Parable of the Great Feast is a "once upon a time" story about a man who gave an extravagant dinner. He sent out many invitations. It would have been a great honor to be invited to the dinner. The host spent a lot of time planning the dinner and he was looking forward to welcoming his guests. Imagine his disappointment and anger when they started making excuses why they weren't coming.

If we look at the reasons the characters in the story make for not coming to the dinner, we realize they aren't good excuses at all. Their actions are inconsiderate, dismissive and self-servicing. They show great disrespect to the host. They missed out on a Great Feast...and they just might not get an invitation to another.

All of us have been invited to lunch or dinner at a friend's home. In real life there are compelling reasons why we might not be able to go. We show how much we care for our friends and valued the invitation by answering the RSVP with our regrets. We don't just ignore the invitation...or worse yet...just not show up.

The Parable of the Great Feast is about God's invitation to join him in heaven. God himself shows humility and hospitality by giving everyone the best seats in the house. We take the invitation to the heavenly Great Feast seriously when we RSVP **YES!** There really aren't any good reasons for not answering yes.

The Writer of Hebrews calls our faith what we hope for and the certainty of what we have yet to experience for ourselves...heaven. We do get a foretaste of heaven every time we come to Mass and receive Jesus' Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar.

We have the invitation to join God at the Great Feast for his Son in heaven and it reads...

...“How happy are those who will sit down at the feast in the Kingdom of God. Will you be there?”

There is no reason for us to hold back. Now is the time for us to RSVP the invitation... **YES!**

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