



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

Come to the Wedding

Readings: Isaiah 25: 6-10a, Ps 23, Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20, Matthew 22: 1-14

As a young clergyman I would make a point of turning up to every wedding reception to which I was invited. Condemned to sit at tables populated by the elderly hard of hearing and the ‘awkward Arthurs’ no-one else could cope with, I was treated to bone shaking music which made conversation all but impossible. Later I would have to endure toe-curlingly inappropriate speeches and get clear before the young bucks descended into late night alcoholic frenzy and I was invited to join in the Lambada. As an old priest I am now, on the whole, hugely relieved not to be invited.

The wedding feast in today’s Gospel is, of course, a rather different affair. Biblical scholars among you will point out that there is a similar parable in St. Luke’s Gospel – similar but different.

In the Lucan account the reluctant guests are not malicious, they are just careless and ungrateful. They are distracted by their own concerns. One wants to look at his new field, the next to inspect his oxen, the third has wife issues. The modern equivalent is people not going to Mass because there is some DIY to do, the car to wash, the wife/husband has got other

plans. God comes a poor second in the priorities of His People. The sad conclusion is their exclusion from the banquet. That is what happens when people lapse – often, tragically, permanently.

The Matthew account is the same parable but dramatically different. This is the wedding of the King's Son. The circus of apostasy has moved on. True some just refuse and reject the invitation but.....much more sinister now is the reaction of others. Not content to reject the eternal and gracious generosity of their Lord, they turn on His servants, abuse them and murder them.

It always seemed to me an extreme overreaction and I couldn't understand it. But now, of course, as the years pass, it all makes sense. This is exactly what is happening in the world. The first stage of apostasy is lapse and indifference. The second stage is vehement and vicious rejection and the persecution of the Church. In our time the servant messengers of Christ are being cruelly persecuted and murdered all over the world by secularists, materialists and militant religious haters of the Gospel.

(Those of you who heard the recent radio debate on abortion will, like me, have wept to realise that of the four promoters of the murder of the innocent, one was a long lapsed evangelical Christian and two were lapsed Catholics.)

Our culture has largely turned away from God. It is not interested in His Grace, His Mercy or His Salvation. For some that ignorance and indifference has transformed into a fiendish hostility. Who would have imagined an

Oxford College banning Christian organisations as dangerous because of their objections to sodomy?

The endgame of Western Europe has moved from a rejection of its Faith to an open hostility to Christ and His Church. We have been warned.

What is being rejected here is the invitation to the wedding of the Son.

What is the wedding of the Son?

The wedding is the wedding of Heaven and Earth.

It is the wedding of God and Man.

It is the place where Fallen Man's dust bound, sin stained destiny is transformed into an eternal hope of reconciliation with our Creator and life unending in the Paradise of God.

The rejection of that is the rejection of God, the rejection of hope, the rejection of our purpose and our eternal destiny. It is soul sickness that perversely prefers the diabolical dismissal of Man and the demonic fury that rises at the approach of mortality against the Truth and His servants.

We are invited to the wedding of the Lord's Son. That banquet is eternal and is prefigured and realised in the Mass. It is the banquet to which the Prophet Isaiah looks forward at the end of history. It is the feast of the finest wines and meats (no vegetarianism in Heaven, thank God). It is the fruit of the one true eternal sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ.

What greater participation in the Godhead?

What greater sustenance for the transfiguration of mortal Man?

This feast is none other than the Feast of the Resurrection for, as Isaiah tells us, on that mountaintop, the Calvary, the shroud that enfolds all people will be destroyed. Death will be swallowed up in victory. The tears of sorrow and sin will be wiped away forever.

It is the final chapter of Salvation History. The mountaintop of Exodus 24 when God confirmed the Old Covenant and Moses and the elders entered the Presence and ate and drank on the sapphire pavement, will become a permanence for God's People in eternity by the New Covenant where the Word gave His Body and Blood to redeem, make holy, His People.

This is the Calvary, the mountaintop, the sacred feast, the eternal sacrifice that is offered at The Feast of the Resurrection at the Mass. As the servants of God we must continue to go out into the world, whatever the cost, to invite people to the banquet, to the Presence, to the wedding of the Son in whom alone is our hope and our salvation.

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