

XX TRINITY 2016
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
EPHESIANS 5.15 St. MATTHEW 22.1



Just what kind of clothes should we wear to a wedding? Suits and ties for men and dresses for women are not necessarily the norm today. If we wore something more casual, would we be asked to leave? Probably not!

There is however an expectation we take a wedding invitation seriously. The invitation comes with an RSVP...yes we will attend...or no we will not be able to attend. Either way...the invitation shows how much we are thought of...we should let the bride and groom know our intentions.

Today's Gospel is an adult "once-upon-a-time" story Jesus tells about a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. Jesus tells us up front this is a story about heaven and how we get there. What kind of clothes are we supposed to wear for the wedding feast in heaven?

Getting invited to a wedding is an honor. The invited guests in today's story didn't think enough of the king's invitation to send back an RSVP. They showed contempt for the king by ignoring his kind invitation...they went about their business...one to his farm...another to open his store...while others beat up and killed the king's employees.

The king was very angry and those who murdered his employees paid a heavy price for their actions. But this was the wedding feast for his son...the king would make certain every table was full. He had some of his employees go out and invite everyone they could find...good and bad alike...to enjoy the king's wedding feast for his son.

Today's Gospel closes with the king finding a man at his son's wedding feast who was not properly dressed. The man gets thrown out of the wedding feast into the dark street...where he cries and gnashes his teeth. That doesn't seem quite fair, does it? Jesus concludes many are invited to the wedding feast (in heaven)...but few are chosen.

The Gospel isn't really about the kind of clothes we wear to weddings but it is about how we get into heaven. The man who shows up without having on the right kind of

wedding clothes is saying he wants heaven on his own terms. He shows great disrespect for the kindness and generosity of the king (God) who wants to see every table at the wedding feast in heaven full.

Every Nuptial Mass begins with the Celebrant reading the Exhortation that talks about the joining of the man and woman in the Sacrament of Marriage symbolizing the "mystical union between Christ and the Church". Marriage is to be taken seriously...so is our commitment to live according to God's plan.

What about the invitation to God's wedding feast for his Son in heaven...what about the "many are called...few are chosen"? Everyone is invited to the wedding feast in heaven...but we have no right to claim a place in heaven if we are unwilling to assume the responsibilities that come with the invitation. The question today's Gospel poses is just how seriously do we take the invitation?

Most of us like to think of God as just an overall nice guy who is kind and generous and will let everyone into heaven no matter what they do or how they conduct themselves. A look at human behavior should tell us otherwise...some people want God and heaven on their terms...or not at all.

Ultimately the Gospel is about who gets to go to heaven. God doesn't stack the decks against anyone...anyone! We are not pieces on a chessboard moved around at God's will, some making it and some not, depending on how he feels at the moment. The invitation to the great wedding feast in heaven goes out to everyone. It is up to us to reply yes, or no!

Jesus supplies us with the right kind of clothes for heaven...in himself...because he has freed us from sin and guilt and made heaven a possibility for everyone.

We have been called to be the Church...it's up to us to choose to be chosen. It's time to answer the invitation with a 'yes'...and let's make certain we are wearing the right kind of clothes.

