

## **An Invitation to Eternal (Heavenly) Banquet**

*By his death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has "opened" heaven to us....He makes partners in his heavenly glorification those who have believed in him and remained faithful to his will. Heaven is the blessed community of all who are perfectly incorporated into Christ" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1026).*

In every Mass, we celebrate the mystery of God's love and mercy by sharing in the body and blood of Christ, the food of eternal life (John 6: 51-58). It is an earthly privilege God gives us, which is an invitation and a preparation to an eternal banquet. In the heavenly and eternal banquet, God will give us an everlasting consolation, happiness, and contentment as Prophet Isaiah describes in the first reading. It is by our perseverance and steadfastness that we are going to share in this everlasting happiness which is beyond human imagining (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Jesus uses the parable of the wedding feast in the Gospel to invite us to reflect on the invitation God gives us. The parable describes three groups of invitees to the banquet. The first invitees were those who initially accepted the invitation, but didn't honor it because of different reasons. The second invitees were those that were later invited to the banquet, came without the proper garment, and were thrown out. The third invitees were those that were later invited, came with proper garment, and enjoyed the banquet.

The parable tells us that God's invitation to eternal banquet is for everyone. However, it is our choice to accept or turn down this invitation. Also, to accept this invitation and to enjoy it means that we have to wear the right garment. The garment we are called to wear is living the life of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds. It is not what we can do by own strength, but by calling on God's help and believing as St. Paul believes in the second reading: "I can do all things in him (Christ) who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). May the good Lord help us to be ever ready for the eternal banquet, Amen.

*"Listen! I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and eat with him, and he will eat with me. To those who win the victory I will give the right to sit beside me on my throne, just as I have been victorious and now sit by my Father on his throne" (Revelation 3:20-21).*