

October 15th, 2017
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle A

1st Reading: Isaiah 25:6 – 10a.

God prepares a lavish feast for all and wipes away all our tears.

Psalms 23:1 – 3a, 3b – 4, 5, 6.

I shall live in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life.

2nd Reading: Philippians 4:12 – 14, 19 – 20.

We can do all things in Christ who strengthens me.

Gospel: Matthew 22:1 – 14.

God invites to the wedding feast whomever he finds.

I can scarcely believe God's abundance

God is good, **all the time**. All the time, **God is good**.

I do not give all my homilies a title, although many I do; but not being able to resist the play on words and St. Paul's inspiration, this one is called "I can scarcely believe God's abundance!" You have heard the old saying, "I've been rich and I've been poor, rich is better!" Well Paul tells us he has lived in all kinds of levels on the social ladder. He has been high on the hog and poor as dirt and his secret for living well in either place is to put his trust in the truth of our Christ, who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

In our first reading Isaiah paints us a prophetic picture of the reign of God. Here there will be an abundant feast with rich food of all kinds and just the right wine will be served, where class doesn't matter because all are invited; and oh yes don't forget, all our tears will be wiped away. Very happily for us, when God is the host, the food has no calories and the wine holds no terrors. Who would like to attend such a feast? I know I would! This is what our loving God has in store for us and our faith promises that there will be one, when the hand of God comes to rest on us at last.

Then there is Matthew's parable of the King's wedding feast. Context is once again important. This is the 3rd parable we have gotten in a row after Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and he is statedly addressing it to the chief priests and elders who would have gotten the allegory intended and pursue his execution.

Admittedly this is a strange story Jesus weaves, and I had some real struggles with it personally. I mean my God, is not going to throw someone out of this party for the wearing the wrong clothes, or footwear or any other outward inadequacy. I mean really who is going to turn down a ticket to a party like this? It's kind of like the saying we used to throw around as kids, "be there! Or be square." On top of that, with the second invite they maltreat the messengers and with the third they kill the King's son. Jesus' point is not missed by the religious leaders: this is what you have done to God's invitation by your rejections, maltreatment of God's prophets, and now God's Son.

So how do I reconcile that last sentence in light of this lavish equalitarian festival? Well it's God saying to me, "joe you have do more than just show up! I have a lot of rule followers out there, but I need more! I need your heart to be in the right place, I need you to show my love and generosity all around the greater Kalamazoo area. joe you know it is not what you have but how you use it, that really matters. Let's keep your baptismal commitment straight as you bring my love to those you come in contact with." I guess God can raise the bar.

Make no mistake, God is asking each of us to respond to God's invitation. Am I going to dine at God's house this week? Am I going to feed the hungry? (just a reminder this Tuesday evening is St. Tom's time to serve at the Gospel Mission) Will I share a meal, a cup of coffee, or just conversation with someone who needs me? How might I offer assistance to those who have lost everything either in the recent hurricanes or wild fires going on right now? Will I participate whole heartedly in this Eucharist and remember to carry it and bring it out of this place to all I meet this week? Some abundant thoughts in this time of scarcity.

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