November 5, 2019

Scripture

Luke 14:15-24
One of those at table with Jesus said to him,
"Blessed is the one who will dine in the Kingdom of God."
He replied to him,
"A man gave a great dinner to which he invited many.
When the time for the dinner came,
he dispatched his servant to say to those invited,
'Come, everything is now ready.'
But one by one, they all began to excuse themselves.
The first said to him,
'I have purchased a field and must go to examine it;
I ask you, consider me excused.'
And another said, 'I have purchased five yoke of oxen
and am on my way to evaluate them;
I ask you, consider me excused.'
And another said, 'I have just married a woman,
and therefore I cannot come.'
The servant went and reported this to his master.
Then the master of the house in a rage commanded his servant,
'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town
and bring in here the poor and the crippled,
the blind and the lame.'
The servant reported, 'Sir, your orders have been carried out
and still there is room.'
The master then ordered the servant,
'Go out to the highways and hedgerows
and make people come in that my home may be filled.
For, I tell you, none of those men who were invited will taste my dinner.'"
Our Scripture Reflection

The banquet is a metaphor found numerous times in the Old Testament and used for the Kingdom of God. Why? Because in a day and place where drought, and therefore, famine was a threat, the idea of a large table filled with rich foods and choice wines was like Heaven on earth! Jesus used the banquet image in today’s Gospel text to describe how we are called to enter His Father’s Kingdom. Many were invited but they choose instead to go their own way and do their own thing. But God (the Host) would not be deterred. He continues to invite everyone even those deemed unworthy to dine with Him. The message for us? Show God that you are willing to accept His gracious invitation by doing His bidding in this life or Your seat may be taken by another in the Kingdom to come.

Food for your Journey

Philip Yancey tells of a certain couple who had planned a lavish wedding reception. They booked a banquet room at the elegant Hyatt hotel, and made the required down payment of half the reception’s cost.
It was not long, though, before the prospective groom had a change of heart. He found it hard to commit, he said to his fiancée. He asked her if they could put the wedding on hold.
She knew what he meant. He didn’t really want to think about it. He just wanted out. So, after a very unpleasant scene, they parted company for good.
One of the bride’s next stops was the office of the Events Manager of the Hyatt. The manager said she was sorry, but most of the deposit was non-refundable. The former bride-to-be had only two options, she explained: she could either forfeit the rest of her down payment or go ahead with the party.
As Yancey tells it, “It seemed crazy, but the more the jilted bride thought about it, the more she liked the idea of going ahead with the party — not a wedding banquet, mind you, but a big blowout. Ten years before, this same woman had been living in a homeless shelter. She had got back on her feet, found a good job and set aside a sizable nest egg. Now she had the wild notion of using her savings to treat the down-and-outs of Boston to a night on the town.
“And so it was that in June of 1990 the Hyatt in downtown Boston hosted a party such as it had never seen before. The hostess changed the menu to boneless chicken — ‘in honor of the groom,’ she said — and sent invitations to rescue missions and homeless shelters. That warm summer night, people who were used to peeling half-nawed pizza off the cardboard dined instead on chicken cordon bleu. Hyatt waiters in tuxedos served hors d’oeuvres to senior citizens propped up by crutches and aluminum walkers. Bag ladies, vagrants and addicts took one night off from the hard life on the sidewalks outside and instead sipped champagne, ate chocolate wedding cake and danced to big-band melodies late into the night.”
—Philip Yancey, What’s So Amazing About Grace? (Zondervan, 1997), 48-49.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear God, I love You and I want to spend eternity with You in Your Kingdom. Help me, Lord, with Your Grace to do the work You have assigned me to do in this life. May I be found worthy one day to join You at Your Heavenly banquet. Amen