

A long, dark bridge spans across the ocean under a vibrant sunset sky with orange, pink, and purple hues. The bridge's structure is silhouetted against the bright horizon. The water below is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky.

# Daily Reflections

## August 20, 2020

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### Scripture

#### **Matthew 22:1-14**

Jesus again in reply spoke to the chief priests and the elders of the people in parables saying, “The Kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.

He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they refused to come.

A second time he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those invited: “Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast.”’

Some ignored the invitation and went away, one to his farm, another to his business.

The rest laid hold of his servants, mistreated them, and killed them.

The king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.

Then the king said to his servants, ‘The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come.

Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find.’

The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, bad and good alike, and the hall was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to meet the guests he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment.

He said to him, ‘My friend, how is it

that you came in here without a wedding garment?’  
But he was reduced to silence.  
Then the king said to his attendants, ‘Bind his hands and feet,  
and cast him into the darkness outside,  
where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.’  
Many are invited, but few are chosen.”

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## Our Scripture Reflection

(Today’s Gospel text must be read along with the Gospel text I presented yesterday from Matthew 20:1-16, the story of the “unfair” Landowner.)

To the religious leaders and teachers Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven as a King Who throws a huge, elegant banquet for His son. Please remember, hosting a banquet in a day and time when grocery stores did exist was a huge endeavor. A great deal of planning and preparation had to take place.

Those invited refused to come, some in a most belligerent manner. They incite the King’s rage and pay dearly for their ingratitude and belligerence.

Not to be deterred, the King dispatches servants to invite anyone and everyone to come to His banquet and the response is huge. Upon entering the banquet hall the King sees a guest who is filthily dressed. The King is insulted by the man’s lack of respect and appreciation in response to His kindness and has him punished severely. Was the King’s behavior towards the poor man wrong and excessive? Please note: Even if the man was poor and lacked the means to purchase formal attire, he would have been offered an outer garment to cover his clothing at the entrance of the banquet hall.

Jesus’ story functions as an allegorical presentation of the Kingdom of Heaven:

1. The banquet is a metaphor for the Kingdom
2. The King represents God Almighty
3. The servants represent the Prophets of God who served as His messengers
4. The invited guests represent the people of God, the Israelites, who rejected God’s invitation to live His way, and therefore, became unworthy of His Kingdom
5. The people from the highways and byways represent the Gentiles
6. The obstinate guest illustrates the point of the parable: While God is gracious, merciful and kind...justice/gratitude call for the recipient of unmerited mercy to respond somehow/some way in GRATITUDE

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## Food for your Journey

The author Reynolds Price tells about the time he was on a fellowship, studying at Cambridge in England. One of his teachers was a venerable old don named Nigel Coghill. He had taught some of the great lights of English literature. Professor Coghill told of visiting his mother in Northern Ireland, when she was at the end of her life. On his last day there, he went into her room only to find her asleep. Or, at least he thought she was asleep. He gazed at her for a while, then turned to go, making every effort to go quietly, not wanting to disturb her. He had reached the door when she said, with some urgency, "Remember, Nigel, I only regret my economies." Now, as the English use the word, she was regretting the times she had been stingy. Indeed, Reynolds Price, after telling the story, went on to reflect on the truth of that in his

own life: the times he was stingy with words of praise, held in reserve expressions of love, was miserly with the attention he paid others. These were the things he regretted.

-Bruce K. Modahl, "Open Heart; Open Hands," September 9, 2001, sermon from Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest, Illinois, [Grace-rf.org/sermons](http://Grace-rf.org/sermons).

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## **A Prayer from the Heart**

Precious Lord, How ungrateful I have been to the One Who gave everything for me! Please forgive me, Lord. May I learn to show my gratitude to You by living the life You desire for me to live. Amen