

[Readings: Isaiah 25:6-10a; Psalm 23; Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20; Matt 22:1-14]

"I really don't want to go to this lunch," Bill won't mind will he?"

That was the question one friend asked of another. Only problem was, Bill would mind. They were all on holiday in Bill's native country. Bill's relatives had offered to fix lunch for the entire group. And better yet, the hosts were going to bring lunch to the group so that no one would have to leave the beautiful house on the sea where they were staying.

"Oh, I don't think that would be a good idea. I think Bill's feelings will be hurt."

"But I want to go to the national park." "Can't you go after lunch?"

"I'd prefer to go before lunch. I won't be missed."

"You will be missed. The invitation went to all of us. But, of course, the decision is yours."

Lunch was a glorious feast of specially prepared meats and cheeses, locally grown vegetables, crisp salad, homemade bread, and fresh-baked blueberry crumble. Drinks and conversations flowed freely. Everyone had a magnificent time, including the national park-goer who decided to delay her trip. She was overheard telling others weeks later that lunch with Bill's family was the highlight of the trip. Some invitations just shouldn't be passed up.

It's only a wedding. At a wedding everyone knows that some invited guests won't be able to make it. It's disappointing. But burning down a village is rather extreme, to say the least! It's only a wedding. So maybe one of the guests shows up in blue jeans and a baseball cap. Is that any reason to call in the bouncers? Not even Miss Manners' book on "Painfully Proper Weddings" suggests outer darkness or wailing and grinding of teeth for someone who missed the memo that this is a black-tie event. After all, it's only a wedding.

You and I receive two invitations every Sunday. It isn't just a wedding. It's not just a matter of showing up. It's not even a matter of what we wear, although fifty years ago women and girls wore dresses and men and boys wore ties.

It's also a matter of what we do. What we do with our relationship with God and His Church. What we do with the members of our family.

The invitation starts with grace. God's grace-filled invitation is for each one of us to come to see Him, to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him.

All of us are invited. Whether we are upright or immoral, everyone receives the

Divine King's invitation. God doesn't care if you have more skeletons in your closet than a Halloween supply store. The King wants people to this feast of "juicy rich food and pure, choice wines!" Come to the mountain! Come to the feast!

What does it mean when we are not dressed properly in the right "wedding garment?" In baptism, each one of us received a baptismal garment, whether it was a christening outfit or a white colored dress or suit. St. Paul says we are to be clothed with "compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, and above all, love." THIS is the kind of outfit you and I are to "wear." It isn't enough to sit in church to make us holy, any more than sitting in a garage makes us a car! Putting on the robes of Jesus Christ is risky. It means laying ourselves open to being made new and changed to look like Jesus Christ Himself. Are YOU ready to take the risk? To be Christ for one another and to do His work?

Accepting God's invitation to come to Church and to come to know Him more deeply is not only for our spiritual refill and renewal; it's also to allow God to shape and mold us into the people God calls us to be. We cannot be self-centered and make excuses for not accepting the invitation. God won't be ignored unless we choose to ignore Him. Make the right choice.

Jesus is commissioning all of us as his modern-day disciples. We are to preach repentance, which literally means, a new way of thinking. A new way of looking at things. Knowing Christ means seeing our world differently.

Jesus calls us His "witnesses," martyrs in Greek. Are you willing to risk knowing Christ and giving witness to Him, even to the point of broken relationships, rejection, injuries, setbacks, tragedies, abuse and crimes against you? "I can do all things in Him Who strengthens me" says St. Paul in our Second Reading today. During His life on earth, Jesus Christ was accused of eating with sinners. He still does that every Sunday with us. We are the sinners He eats with. Talk about a "Happy Meal!" AMEN!