

Deacon Jim's Homily for 29th Sunday Ordinary Time—October 15, 2023

Are you wearing your wedding garment or just your blue jeans?

When we hear the Gospel today, we may want to look at what we are wearing and make sure that it is appropriate for Sunday Mass—last thing that we would want to do is to get thrown outside like the one wedding guest in the Gospel today.

Over the years of reading that Gospel, I have often wondered why the King would have been so mad at the wedding guest for not having the proper attire, after all the king invited everyone to the wedding banquet after his first chosen people had turned him down. It seems to me that that particular guest took the invitation and came just as he was dressed, maybe he did not have an opportunity to go and buy something appropriate for the wedding banquet.

Let me share with you why the King was not happy with that guest. You see in those days, when the King invited people to a wedding, they were provided with a wedding garment when they arrived. The King honored all of His guests by giving them a festive robe—fit for such a royal celebration. Unfortunately that guest, refused to wear the garment that the king provided. His lack of a wedding garment was an example of extreme disrespect for both the king and his son. The wording, “And he was speechless,” indicates that he was without excuse.

Can you think of an opportunity in the Catholic Church that we are given a garment to wear when we enter into the celebration? We as Catholics have been provided with this garment at baptism and we will also be provided with this garment at our funeral Mass. We are clothed in Christ at our baptism with the words, “You have been clothed in Christ” because we were different in the eyes of God, free of sin and we became an adopted son/daughter of God. We were welcomed into the family. The baptismal prayer continues saying “May this white garment be a sign to you of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring it unstained into eternal life.

When we are called from this life to eternal life, we will once again be provided with a garment from the church, the funeral pall, a full culmination of our baptismal life in Christ. The pall signifies that at the time of death, we also appear different to God as we enter into eternal life with the hopes of enjoying the eternal banquet in heaven.

I share with you today that we are also called each day to “Clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember, being a follower of Jesus and being a Christian requires a mindset of Christ.” (St. Paul to the Romans 13:14). We are called weekly (even daily) to share in

the banquet of the Eucharist here on earth. We are clothed in the graces that we receive not only through the sacrament of the Eucharist but also through the sacrament of reconciliation. We put on a beautiful grace laden garment when we participate at Mass.

I know that when I put on freshly pressed dress clothes, possibly with a tie and a jacket, that I feel different. I walk differently, avoiding puddles or sand and dirty areas or so that I do not soil my new clothes. I have a different attitude when I am wearing the nicer clothes vs just my old jeans and sweatshirt.

Do we do the same when we put on the garment that God clothes us with each week at the Mass? Do we walk out of church feeling a little different? Do we try to avoid the stains of sin, anger, greed, pride etc. so as not to get them on our fresh garment? How long do we stay clothed in that garment before we want to take it off and get back to our old ways and walk towards the mud puddles of sin?

This week, I would ask you to think about the garment that Christ asks you to put on each week. Is it a garment that you want to continue to wear to enjoy the bountiful wedding feast that Jesus invites us to? Or do we just throw it to the side and dishonor God and live life in our old grungy clothes?

I pray that we will all accept the beautiful garments that Jesus wants to give us each day in this life and that one day we will all wear those garments to the wedding feast of the lamb, the eternal banquet in heaven.

God's Blessings,

Deacon Jim