

**Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

By: Fr. Chris

Many of you have seen the movie Titanic. If you haven't you certainly know that the Titanic was the ship of its day. It had all the luxury one could imagine. It was considered the best of its time. Along with the appointments one could imagine that the food would be the best too. Those who were the rich could eat the finest meals imaginable. You might ask, "I wonder what that was?" What did the wealthy eat aboard that ship?

I found a website that supposedly has the menu for the Titanic's last meal. In first class they would have had hors d'oeuvres, oysters, cream of barley soup, salmon, filet mignon, chicken lyonnaise, mixed vegetables, lamb with mint sauce, roast duck, beef sirloin, peas & carrots, rice, and new potatoes. That sounds like a wonderful meal. Then I realized that I have enjoyed each of those items at one time or another. I have been fortunate to have eaten nice meals in restaurants, in people's homes, and in my parent's house. I know that many of you have been on cruise ships. You have had buffets that had these things on them. You may have been to Las Vegas or to Biloxi and been served these kinds of things too. In other words, for most of us, this meal isn't terribly special.

So, when we try to imagine what the heavenly banquet will look like when we get to heaven we have a difficult time imagining that it would be anything that we can't already get on earth. We might think, "What is the big deal about waiting for the heavenly banquet when I can enjoy all the benefits now?" That is a legitimate question. I believe that what is behind that question is the essence of the parable.

Jesus suggests that heaven isn't so much what is different, but what kind of relationship we have with the giver of the banquet. When the king invited the guests to his son's wedding he expected they would be overjoyed. Yet they found plenty of excuses to avoid coming. They didn't have a relationship with the king or the prince that would have made them want to come. They missed out on an opportunity of grace because they didn't see anything special in coming.

Those who came to the feast realized that they were coming to something special. They knew they were invited to a wedding banquet. Yet, there was one person

who didn't quite get it. He figured that he could come into the banquet and partake in the king's hospitality without anything changing on his part. He soon discovered that wasn't so. You can't come to a wedding feast without the proper garment.

We might think that this is rather harsh. This king invites all sorts of people to the feast but then kicks out one guy because he isn't wearing the right clothes. What's the big deal? Remember this is a parable. Recall last week I said that parables have a way of capturing us.

What does one do when they know they are invited to a wedding? They send back their RSVP. They buy proper clothes. They get a gift and a card. They may even have to make travel plans and take time off from work. They would a person do that? It's because they have a relationship with the person getting married or with the parents of the bride or groom.

Now, why did the guy get kicked out of the banquet? He didn't have a relationship with the groom—Jesus, nor did he have a relationship with the host—God. He was invited but the invitation didn't change his life. He didn't act upon that invitation. He wasn't changed by it. We are members of the household of God. Each week we are invited to the house of the Lord for His banquet. What is the reason that we come? Do we come here out of obligation? Do we come out of fear? In what ways are we not dressed properly for the feast? Do we cling to the soiled garments of anger and bitterness? Do we place money or pleasure ahead of our love for God and His people? My hope and prayer is that we develop our relationship with the Lord to such an extent that we would go to great lengths to serve Him.

We know that God loves us. Do we love God? Do we want to be a part of His eternal banquet? Our response to Christ is shown in many ways. Certainly our presence at Eucharist is a sign that we have said yes to God. But how we treat our brothers and sisters in Christ also says something about our relationship to the King. The Lord wants us to love and honor Him and all of His people. That takes faith and courage. Let us pray to have the courage to be united with Him on earth so to share in the heavenly banquet forever. Amen.

**READINGS OF THE WEEK**

Isaiah 25:6-10

Philippians 4:12-20

Matthew 22:1-14

October 15, 2017

# 靈 修 生 活

## 跟 隨 耶 穌 食 大 餐

張 家 興

跟隨耶穌，一向的印象是等於背負十字架，並且是天天背負十字架，至死方休。根據今天福音，跟隨耶穌卻有另一層意義，就是應邀赴盛宴，食大餐，天主「找數」。

不過，聖經也告訴我們，上主廣發請柬，請人無數，但不理睬的人亦無數。我以為，把這段聖經放在今天的香港，甚至香港的教會，同樣適用。我們縱然已經入教，但不等如進入天國。大部份時間，我們還是活在雲霧之中，只看到眼前直接可以透過五官摸得到、嗅得到的物質和肉身享受，至於咫尺以外的盛宴，則懵然不見，不予理會。至少，我就是如此。我可說大半生活在雲霧之中，要到十五年前發現有腦瘤，才開始清醒一點，明白多一點甚麼叫做生離死別，明白多一點甚麼叫做「拭去臉上的淚痕」，甚麼叫做「上主的盛宴」。那是我第一次近距離地經驗到「生命可能終斷」，從未想過會失去的東西可能失去，連身邊最親、最愛的人可能不會再見。真的，事情要發展到這地步，我才開始清醒一點，知道要排列甚麼最重要，應給多點時間，甚麼不那麼重要，應該推卻。不過，這也只是維持了一段很短時間。

終於，三年前，腦瘤復發。最初兩年，我立定心意，放下一切，專注健康，專心去活，去品嚐生命。但到第三年，體力逐漸回復，不知不覺間，又開始過著忙碌的生活，不是埋頭寫文章希望投稿國際學術期刊，就是組織夫妻工作坊希望推動新的工作計劃，或答應出席講座分享等。工作和工作成果再次成為目標，吞噬一切其他意識。曾經在個人圖畫上色彩奪目的，包括生活、親情、友情、人情等，開始淡褪。

近日，因為籌備促進乳癌病人夫妻關係的工作坊，有機會接觸到這些病人。一位二十七歲的少女，因為得了乳癌，決定不再營營役役，做錢財的奴隸。患上癌症，從來只有人埋怨，很少人會感恩的。她卻慶幸自己年紀輕輕的，得到此病，因此能及早醒覺，追求真正豐盛的人生。我知道，要享用耶穌給我準備的大餐，我就需要擁有這種洞悉世情的眼光。

以後，我希望多些與癌症病人工作，其中一個目的，就是為能多些聽到這類故

## 本 週 讀 經

二 零 一 七 年 十 月 十 五 日

依 25:6-10; 斐 4:12-20; 瑪 22:1-14