

those who accept the invitation but who do not clothe themselves in Christ's grace and love. For whatever reason they have accepted the invitation while seeking not to allow themselves to be transformed by Him. As St Augustine of Hippo (Sermon 45) explained: *What is that "wedding garment" then?The wedding garment" is such charity as this. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal." ..."Though," said he, "I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." See, these are the miracles of men who very often have not "the wedding garment." "Though," he says, "I have all these, and have not Christ, I am nothing." Is then "the gift of prophecy" nothing? is then "the knowledge of mysteries" nothing? It is not that these are nothing; but "I, if I have them, and have not charity, am nothing."*

-Stephen S.

Entrance antiphon: The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth; by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.

First Reading: Acts 2: 14, 36-41

Psalms 22: Response: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Second Reading: 1Peter 2: 20-25

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my own sheep and my own know me. Alleluia!

Gospel: John 10: 1-10

Memorial Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: The good Shepherd has risen, who laid down his life for his sheep and willingly died for his flock, alleluia.



Fourth Sunday of Easter

Cycle A, 2023 Weekly Reflection:

The Man without the wedding garment (Matthew 22:12) In this parable Jesus compares the kingdom of Heaven to a king's wedding feast for his son. The first invited guests all make their

excuses for not accepting. The king then instructs his servants to go to the thoroughfares and invite all they can find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall is filled with guests. But Jesus then continues: *"..when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'* For many are called, but few are chosen." At first blush the treatment of the man may seem harsh since the man has just been invited from the street. We might wonder how he can be expected to have obtained a wedding garment.

It should be noted that only one man has no wedding garment amongst all the others similarly invited. At the literal level, it might have been understood by Jesus' listeners that wedding garments would have been offered by the king's servants to all as they entered. Scholars say that the king addressing the man as 'Friend' implies that not wearing a wedding garment was strange and indefensible. They note that when Jesus is confronted with Judas' betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane he similarly says: *"Friend, why are you here?"* Also, the fact that the man at the wedding feast is speechless in response demonstrates that he had no excuse for his default. As one commentator says: *"It implies that the man was conscious of his omission when he entered, and was intentionally guilty of his neglect"*.

Thus, the first part of the parable tells us we have all been invited, Jews and Gentiles, good and bad, to God's banquet in heaven. Many do not accept the invitation, but find their lives full of so many other things that there is no time for God in them. The man without the wedding garment represents