

From the Deacon's Desk

### **Trunk or Treat:**

On Tuesday October 31<sup>st</sup>, members of the Youth Ministry Team (Kaylie, Geri, Bev, Mary, and Jerry) will be at the Shepherd Trunk or Treat gathering of cars with open trunks to pass out candy to everyone who is there. Look for us under the St. Vincent de Paul Parish sign.

### **Harvest Decorations:**

Thanks to Diane Courter and Joyce Noyes for the harvest environment set-up in church, and for Bev Kalmar who continues to bring in flowers from her garden to beautify our church.

### **All Saints and Souls Day Celebration & Pictures of Departed Loved Ones:**

As we move into the beginning of the end of the liturgical year, we celebrate All Saints and All Souls Day.

**All Saints Day is a solemn celebration in the Roman Catholic Church and is a Holy Day of Obligation. This year all Saints Day is Wednesday November 1 (a Holy Day of Obligation and Mass will be celebrated at 7 pm) and the next day Wednesday November 3 is All Souls Day.**

The beautiful reality about Catholicism is that we believe that death does not divide the one family under God. Some of God's people are alive on this earth (you and me), and some of God's people are alive in the next world with the Lord. All Saints and All Souls Day celebrate the reality that we still are all God's one family.

**As a way to remember and celebrate All Saints and All Souls Day, I invite you to bring pictures of your departed loved ones to display in church throughout November.** The pictures and photos will remind us of those members of our family who have gone before us in faith to live with the Lord. Similar to last year we will put the display up on tables near the white northwest wall of the church. Please remember to put your name on the back of the photos so we can return them to you at the end of November. **Please bring your pictures to me before the weekend of October 28 and 29.**

### **Scripture Today:**

Today's gospel is about a wedding feast but a very strange and very bazaar story if we were listening well; it puzzles us, irritates us, and makes us feel that the whole thing is unreal. Who on earth would ever receive an invitation to a royal wedding, or a formal dinner at the white house, or dinner with the Pope at the Vatican, and say "no, I have to tend to my ordinary business around the house!?"

Yet, this is a parable and the parables of Jesus, by their very nature, are meant to be over-the-top and extreme in their language because they are meant to shock people into paying attention. Parables force people to look deeper within the story to find the real meaning. Parables are not literal so don't literalize them.

Jesus' favorite style of preaching was through parables, and one reason we have difficulty with parables is because we're not used to symbolic language, and we don't know the cultural customs that Jesus' stories require. The main parts of this story are the wedding invitations themselves and the wedding garment.

Now we all know about invitations and RSVPs: We all send them out, but seldom do we receive them all back. Sometimes those who don't respond show up anyway. Other times, people respond that they will attend our

event and then don't. Occasionally, people come to an event not having read all the information and arrive at the wrong time, or in the wrong attire. Sometimes we want to know who will be there before we respond.

What we need to know about this parable and about Jesus' culture is that there were always two invitations sent out... one to announce the event and ask if you planned to attend, then a second invitation telling you the exact time of the event. In between the first and second invitation, if you planned to attend, you were provided a wedding garment to wear to the event. You did not wear your own clothes for a variety of reasons and one being you were never to show up dressed better than the host.

So in this parable, the king gets rightly upset because in sending out the second invitation to those who have already said they will attend, they changed their minds for no good reasons. Worse even than changing their minds, they offer really lame excuses for not attending after they said they would. Now you begin to understand why the King is so upset.

The second key point in this Gospel is the wedding garments. As I said, if you already sent in your RSVP to the first invitation, you received the proper wedding clothes before the event. A person in this story is singled out for arriving to the wedding without the proper clothing after he has received it from the king. We are talking about insult upon insult to the king in this story. So what is this story really about?

As in all biblical stories, this story, although originally directed to the religious leaders of Jesus' day, is now directed to you and to me. We have been invited to the wedding feast of the king's son. Jesus Christ is the bridegroom who has married himself to the world, and we have been invited to the celebration of our lives.

The next question addressed to us is, are we dressed properly? I'm not talking about the clothes we literally wear to church, but what God asked us to clothe ourselves in to celebrate appropriately his son Jesus Christ. In the Bible, "clothing" is often a metaphor for the good works of faithful discipleship. We "put on the Lord Jesus" at our baptism, and clothe ourselves in Christ. We are to clothe ourselves as Jesus did, with compassion, humility, justice, the righteousness of following the commandments of God, and putting our neighbors before ourselves. We are meant to be CLOTHED in Jesus' pattern of thinking and living.

If we have said "yes" to the invitation to be a part of this wedding celebration, of Jesus' en-flesh-ment in all our human affairs, we'd better be dressed appropriately with the mind, heart, and actions of Jesus.

When I think of Jesus and weddings, I most often think of the Wedding at Cana story where Jesus turns water into wine. Whenever people encountered Jesus, their lives went from being like water (tasteless, odorless, colorless) to that of a life filled like wine with color, taste, and joy. When people encountered Jesus, their lives were filled "to the brim" with abundance and they felt that their lives were "spilling over" with fullness.

### **Living the Eucharist: October 9 through November 13**

Last Monday we began our Living the Eucharist program and looked at the first part of the Mass and its introductory rites. We looked at the reasons why we gather as a community of faith, and the significance the faith community plays in the mission of the church.

Next week we will move to the first major event in the Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is so important that the second part of the Mass cannot occur without first celebrating it.

Living the Eucharist will occur on the following Mondays: October 9, October 16, October 23, October 30, November 6, and November 13. All sessions will begin with a pot luck at 6 pm (bring a dish to pass) and the presentation and group discussions will be from 6:30 until approximately 7:30/8:00 pm.