

The parable of the invitation of the King to come to the banquet was an exhortation of Jesus to the Jews to join His new Church and symbolic of the banquet of the Mass and the eternal banquet of Heaven.

The king sent his servants to invite people to the wedding, but they would not come. This refers to the Father, who sent His servants, the prophets-- to His Chosen People. He did so because the Chosen people were not living faithfully according to the Covenant and so refused to join the Church. Although God sent prophets (the apostles), the Jewish leaders would not listen to them and mistreated and killed them. As a result, the king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. This may be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in 70 AD.

Then the king said, *"The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come. Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find."* This was an invitation to the Gentiles to join the early Church, because many Jews refused. The early Church became less and less Jewish and more and more Gentile. Huge numbers of non-Jews (Gentiles) flocked into the Church. As Jesus said in the parable, all those found on the streets and byways would be invited.

There is a warning at the end of the parable. The king noticed someone at the wedding banquet not wearing the wedding garment and ordered him to be thrown out. We can understand this to mean--the man was not living a good life, his soul was not in the state of grace.

Years ago, there was a woman who attended Mass every day at the Cathedral in Wichita, Kansas. No matter how hot it was or how much snow was on the ground, she was there at daily Mass. Back when the Cathedral had a school, the children attended daily Mass. The children noticed an elderly woman, who sat in the same place, and always without fail wore the same dress. The children would snicker and make fun of her because she wore the same old dress every day. For years and years, she came to daily Mass and for years and years she wore the same dress. Finally, one day, the elderly woman was not at Mass and people began to wonder where she was. Someone went to her home and found her in bed wearing one of her dresses. She had died in her dress. And when they cleaned out her apartment, in her dresser was another dress exactly as the one she was wearing. Both were exactly alike. There were no other dresses, no pants, no shirts. That's all she owned. Yet, she wore her best clothes to come to Mass. As she was dressed for the banquet of the Mass, she was dressed for

the banquet of heaven. When they cleaned out her apartment, everything she owned fit in one box. Although few people knew her, the Cathedral was completely full of many who wanted to pay tribute to the poor woman, who was faithful to coming to Mass every day and faithful in wearing her best clothes. Her dress became a symbol of her faithfulness to daily Mass. When the children learned she was poor and had only two dresses exactly alike, they were sorry for making fun of her and wanted to attend her funeral.

Everyone is invited to the banquet of the Eucharist, but not everyone comes. We should ask our self, *"Are we properly spiritually clothed to receive the King of Heaven in the Eucharist into the banquet of our heart?"* *Is our soul is not in the state of grace to receive Holy Communion?"*

The Mass is an image of eternal wedding banquet in heaven. The Mass is truly a wedding feast. Many are invited, but few come! Most importantly, our soul is to have the garment of being in the state of grace. All are invited to the banquet of Mass, but must adhere to the bride of Christ's necessary requirements, just as the king in the gospel required all who come to wear the proper garment.

In order for Catholics to receive Communion, their soul must be in the state of grace, which is the garment for the wedding feast. Once a person

commits a mortal sin, they are not permitted to receive Holy Communion, because they have thrown aside their wedding garment. If one receives Communion, not in the state of grace, he receives absolutely no grace, but rather commits a sacrilegious communion abhorrent to God.

We are unable to go to heaven, if we don't have the wedding garment of our soul being in the state of grace. And we can't receive Jesus in Holy Communion if our soul is not in the state of grace. We don't want to be thrown out of the heavenly feast and cast into the fiery furnace because we chose to not wear the garment of salvation.

The poor woman's dress is a symbol of her faithfulness to attending the banquet of the King at Mass by her receiving Jesus in Holy Communion and now she most likely enjoys the richest of foods and most glorious delights of the banquet of heaven.

The Mass and Heaven are like the mountain spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, *"On this mountain the Lord of hosts will provide for all peoples a feast of rich food and choice wines." On His Mountain, He will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the web that is woven over all the nations; He will destroy death forever. The Lord God will wipe away the tears from every*

*face; the reproach of His people He will remove. And we will see Him face to face for "Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us."*

Let us be faithful in coming to His banquet of the Mass, and worshipping Him and someday we will sit at the banquet of the feast of the King in heaven. And may we ask the Queen of Heaven to help us always wear the Wedding Garment and be ready for the Eternal Feast of heaven.