

HOMILY 28TH SUN OT YRA 2017

How many of you remember the royal wedding between Prince Charles and Lady Dianna? I was in London a few weeks before the wedding. You would not believe the hype. Every business and restaurant had posters in the windows and were selling memorabilia. I cannot imagine anyone in England being invited to that royal wedding and not going.

In the Gospel reading today Jesus likens the Kingdom of Heaven to a royal wedding banquet. At the time of our death, we will be face to face with God and he is going to invite each one of us to come to heaven with him. Sounds like a no brainer doesn't it? But the point of the parable is that many people are going to say no to the invitation. Many people are going to pick something else over spending all eternity with God in heaven. The truth is that God is inviting us into a deeper relationship with him and his Church. That is what the spiritual journey is all about. It is a journey that is not over until we die. The Kingdom of Heaven starts here. If we say yes to God in this life, we are more likely to recognize him and choose him at the time of our death. If we continually say no to God in this life, we are less likely to recognize him and chose heaven at the time of our death.

We learn in the parable that everybody is invited to the royal wedding banquet. Some accept and some refuse. Of those who came to the wedding banquet, one man was not dressed in a wedding garment and he was treated the same way as those who did not come. Scripture scholars tell us that it may have been the custom for the king to supply the wedding garment so not wearing it was an insult to the king. The point is: you have to do more than just show up. You need to take the next step on the spiritual journey to grow closer to God and his Church.

Why do we say no to God's invitation in this life? For many of us here today, including myself, we have kind of get comfortable where we are at and we do not want to take the next

step on the spiritual journey. We need to push ourselves to take the next step. So what is that for you? I cannot tell you what to do; I can only make some suggestions. You have to decide what God is inviting you to do. Every week everyone is invited to attend the celebration of the Mass. Every week, 70-80% of our registered Parish family members say no. If you are not attending Mass regularly, maybe you want to make that commitment today. When we come to Mass do we see it as the penance we have to do to fulfill our Sunday weekend obligation or do we see it as a big celebration? Pope Francis tells us that we should not look like we just came from a funeral. When visitors walk in do they think everyone is so happy? I want to be part of this community. Maybe you are called to be more welcoming when you come to church. We are now called to full and active participation. Do you actively sing and pray? Many people have told me that they were told as a child that they could not sing and they remember it to this day. First of all, Heather told me that everybody can sing, and when everyone sings together it makes a joyful sound. If you were discouraged as a child it is time to get over it. Maybe you are being called to stay till the end of Mass. Or maybe you are called to come to coffee and donuts or the spaghetti dinner or the pizza night to get to know the community. I have to admit that being part of this Parish family is one of the things that I love about coming to Mass each weekend. When I am away on vacation, a couple of times I have celebrated Mass alone. I do not like that. I normally go to Mass where I am on vacation, and it is nice to see what other parishes do, sometimes there are things I can steal, but I am always glad to be back with my Parish Family. If you do not get to know the community here you are missing out. Maybe you are being called to come to Coffee and Conversation, a Bible Study, or one of our faith formation programs. Maybe you are being called to serve on one of our Commissions and help plan and run some of our

activities. Maybe you are called to personal prayer. We should all be praying and reading the Bible regularly. Start small and expand from there.

Your homework this week. Pray about what God is inviting you to do and pick one thing that you want to work on. I know I am hoping to get to heaven and I want to take all of you with me.