

Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year C • Psalter Week 2



YOU ARE INVITED...

(LUKE 14:1. 7-14)

The community to which Luke belonged apparently had a sizable proportion of non-Jewish members: hence, elements of Gentile or Greek culture would be understandable to the readers of his Gospel account.

Thus, the setting of a banquet meal would be quite in line with discussing matters of a serious nature about human life and religious belief. This occurs several times in the third Gospel and finds its highest expression in Jesus' teaching at the Last Supper.

We might note a couple of interesting details from the first line of our Gospel reading today: Jesus has obviously been invited to a meal with a prominent member of the Pharisee party. To accept such an offer to share table fellowship suggests that Jesus had no fundamental issue with his host, otherwise he could not have gone to his house. But there are a couple of warning bells ringing for the reader: first, this occurs "on a sabbath day", usually heralding a controversy of some sort; secondly, the unspecified others "watched him closely" in a hostile manner, waiting to catch him out.

Jesus' remarks to the other guests about not pushing themselves forward at social occasions is not just a matter of good manners or etiquette: there is, as in all parables, something deeper at work. Jesus illustrates his teaching about God reversing human order with the parable about the guest who is embarrassed by having to give up the place at table, to which they had assumed they were entitled, to someone more important. He also warns them against being apparently generous but expecting to be rewarded, or compensated, in return. ■

REFLECT

Hospitality towards the stranger was a sacred duty in the culture of Jesus' time. Jesus' host and table companions are not sincere in their sharing a meal with him, as their intention is to discover something that they can use against him.

The standard we should try to emulate is that of the kingdom of God. Luke has stressed that the Gospel is to be announced to those on the margins of society, people who are usually neglected or pushed aside. This will bring reward, not from other people, but from God: it is God who humbles and exalts.

Opening one's house to a stranger can be a risky matter in the present day: we cannot presume that someone we do not know will not abuse their host's welcome. We can think of incidents in history where people have given shelter to others and dreadful crimes have been committed against them. But, as communities, we can collectively offer food and shelter to those in need. We should interpret Jesus' teaching in the light of our own time and culture and act together where we can, even if it simply means supporting the work of parish or local charities or helping efforts to alleviate the suffering of less fortunate and lonely members of society. We will not receive any material reward for doing this, but something more important. ■

LEARN

One element to our celebration of the Eucharist is that of sharing a meal together.

In the mind of Jesus, given his cultural background, this involves mutual respect and acceptance.

Hence, the sign of peace which we offer to each other before receiving Holy Communion is deeply symbolic.

It is saying that we are at peace with those with whom we are celebrating. If we cannot offer someone such a sign or gesture, then we ought to sort out the situation.

SAY

Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you.

(Marty Haugen)

DO

Find some way of contributing to people in need in your parish or local community.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of mercy to all who call to you.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

God of might, giver of every good gift,
put into our hearts the love of your name,
so that, by deepening our sense of reverence,
you may nurture in us what is good
and, by your watchful care,
keep safe what you have nurtured.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Ecclesiasticus 3:17-20, 28-29

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus.
My son, be gentle in carrying out your business,
and you will be better loved than a lavish giver.
The greater you are, the more you should behave humbly,
and then you will find favour with the Lord;
for great though the power of the Lord is,
he accepts the homage of the humble.
There is no cure for the proud man's malady,
since an evil growth has taken root in him.
The heart of a sensible man will reflect on parables,
an attentive ear is the sage's dream.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 67

Response:

In your goodness, O God, you prepared a home for the poor.

- The just shall rejoice at the presence of God,
they shall exult and dance for joy.
O sing to the Lord, make music to his name;
rejoice in the Lord, exult at his presence.
(R.)

- Father of the orphan, defender of the widow,
such is God in his holy place.
God gives the lonely a home to live in;
he leads the prisoners forth into freedom.
(R.)
- You poured down, O God, a generous rain:
when your people were starved you gave them new life.
It was there that your people found a home,
prepared in your goodness, O God, for the poor. (R.)

SECOND READING Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.
What you have come to is nothing known to the senses: not a blazing fire, or a gloom turning to total darkness, or a storm; or trumpeting thunder or the great voice speaking which made everyone that heard it beg that no more should be said to them. But what you have come to is Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where the millions of angels have gathered for the festival, with the whole Church in which everyone is a "first-born son" and a citizen of heaven. You have come to God himself, the supreme Judge, and been placed with the spirits of the saints who have been made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

If anyone loves me he will keep my word,
and my Father will love him,
and we shall come to him.
Alleluia

GOSPEL

Luke 14:1, 7-14

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.
On a sabbath day Jesus had gone for a meal to the house of one of the leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they picked the places of honour. He said this, "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished person than you may have been invited, and the person who invited you both may come and say, 'Give up your place to this man.' And then, to your embarrassment, you would have to go and take the lowest place. No; when you are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your host comes, he may say, 'My friend, move up higher.' In that way, everyone with you at the table will see you honoured. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted."
Then he said to his host, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesy by inviting you in return. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; that they cannot pay you back means that

you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again."
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May this sacred offering, O Lord,
confer on us always the blessing of salvation,
that what it celebrates in mystery
it may accomplish in power.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

How great is the goodness, Lord,
that you keep for those who fear you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed by this bread from the heavenly table,
we beseech you, Lord,
that, being the food of charity,
it may confirm our hearts
and stir us to serve you in our neighbour.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.