

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 22:1-14

And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

(KJV)

Each Divine Liturgy is a wedding feast for believers to be united with the Lord God and with each other. The invitation to attend to the feast goes out to all believers,

Participating in the Divine feast is completely voluntary, Many, many individuals choose not to participate for various reasons. The world is filled with individuals that could benefit from partaking of Christ's Precious Body and Blood.

In each community, large numbers of people live alone. Some are single individuals. Others are separated, divorced or are widowed. Some live in marriage but feel lonely in their circumstances.

Accepting the invitation to participate in the Divine Liturgy and partake of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ is away to become part of and remain part of an eternal community.

In the present world it is said that people often do not know their neighbors. Some husbands and wives live separate lives with little common interaction in the home. Family dinners are not a regular tradition in all homes.

God's Holy Church is where unity in community is alive and experienced. Parishes are an example of a community of love exemplified with all partaking from the same Chalice of Christ's Body and Blood.

Unity in the parish strengthens the parishioners. Parishioners need not feel alone when they unite with others in worship and in partaking of Christ's Body and Blood.

Believers draw strength from the unity and bond in Christ in the parish. The Gospel nourishes and strengthens attentive listeners. The present Gospel describes the invitation that goes forth when each Divine Liturgy is celebrated.

Humans are communal beings. Unity with others in Jesus Christ is the ultimate unity. Jesus Christ brings believers together as each participates in Communion in God's Holy Church.

Depression, despair and despondency are combated by being active in following Jesus Christ. Loneliness is defeated by uniting with Christ in prayer and in partaking of Christ's Precious Body and Blood.

The Lord God does not disappoint those persons choosing to say "yes" to God's constant invitations. Believers benefit when uniting with Jesus Christ and living in God-pleasing ways.

Taking up one's personal cross is a part of being united with Christ. Jesus Christ set the example of experiencing the Cross. Being responsible in handling the personal crosses of life leads to a fulfilling life in Christ.

Jesus' Cross led to the joy of the Resurrection. Dealing with personal crosses in life results in new life and renewal of life in Christ. The Holy Gospel offers instruction and lessons for the paths to follow for unity and renewal in Christ.

Married couples are challenged to grow in Christ through their marriage. The marriage ceremony is only a beginning together. The road to eternal life requires husbands and wives to exert effort to continue to grow together in Christ.

The Holy Scriptures offer and illuminate the lessons of love and sacrifice that husbands and wives, mothers and fathers are to heed and embrace. Married and family life are a constant challenge in every generation.

God's Holy Church offers the nourishment and guidance for parishioners to follow and travel the path to the Heavenly Kingdom. Life changes as individuals age. Repentance and changes are required in the way life is to be lived.

Living in Christ and growing in Christ are constant expectations from the time the believer exits the Baptismal font. Journeying to the Heavenly Kingdom is achieved through traveling paths defined and illumined in God's Holy Church.

The present Gospel is proclaimed in the Church each year to remind believers of the importance of saying "yes" to the invitation to join in the Divine Feast. Attentive believers heed the Lord's invitation and benefit.

Thank God for the constant love and willingness to invite believers to draw near and to be Divinely nourished. Thank God for the Lord God voluntarily choosing to be Crucified and Resurrecting from the dead offering hope for life eternal.

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Venerable Moses the Black of Ethiopia. Venerable Sava of Pskov. Synaxis of the Serbian Saints. August 28/September 10, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic