

28th Sunday – A – 2017
October 15, 2017
Holy Spirit (HG)

Is 25:6-10a
Phil 4:12-14, 19-20
Matt 22:1-10

I. Last weekend we began our annual renewal of treasure campaign. As you know, each year, at about this time, we collectively take a look at our level of financial commitment to our parish and prayerfully consider whether or not that accurately measures what I can do. As I reflected upon that and the readings for this weekend, I recalled an incident which happened in my family years ago....

- uncle – member of a parish which had built a school, a parish hall, some space for offices – but no church. They used the parish as the church.
- eventually, after many years – 20 or so, it was announced that the parish would now build a church
- my uncle was ecstatic! He was so happy and enthused for the project and he wanted to do his part in the building campaign
- meanwhile, his daughter, my first cousin, decided she didn't want anything to do with it! When she heard there would be a campaign she created a great distance between herself and the parish.
- their responses illustrate two different ways, two different attitudes about being members of a parish. My uncle felt a great love for his parish, was proud of his parish, wanted to do his part – not because he was particularly wealthy, he wasn't, but simply because he wanted to be part of the process.
- my cousin, on the other hand, didn't share in that same enthusiasm. Instead of seeing this as an opportunity to be part of something important, she wanted to disappear into the woodwork.

II. Those are two different attitudes we can take about being a member of a parish. Each of you are like my uncle: you are here because you want to be part of something important. You are the members of the parish who have always been here; you are the ones who support the parish financially, you are just as loyal as the bricks in the building that hold the church up! You are the members who share in the same sense of pride and commitment as my uncle.

The envelopes in the pews contain a brochure which lists our accomplishments of this past year, as well as our goals for the coming year.

- each year we move into a stronger financial position
- listed is what you have helped to make possible from this past year
- second column: some of our goals for the coming year
- please read the brochure in its entirety

Then also find a pledge form for this coming year. Please prayerfully consider your level of financial commitment for the coming year. Compare your current level with your current income: please consider if you can raise your commitment. If that is not possible, then it is not possible. But in either case, *please return* a completed pledge form. Otherwise we will be mailing a pledge form to all those who have not returned one. Your prompt response will save the parish a lot of time and money on a mailing.

- III. The readings – both the first reading from Isaiah and the gospel reading from Matthew – give us the image of a banquet. The banquet, of course, is God’s heavenly banquet in eternal life. In the gospel Jesus is in Jerusalem – in the last week of his life – and he is addressing the chief priests and elders of the people. They would presumed that, of course, they will be part of the banquet. But Jesus is pointing out to them that they haven’t always been listening – that they didn’t listen to the prophets, often times rejecting the prophets, even killing them. So they really were not listening to God’s invitation to share in his life.

All are invited into God’s realm. But we must be willing to accept the invitation. There is a response required – an RSVP. We respond by listening to God’s word to us and out that word in daily life.

- IV. Participating in the life of one’s parish is one way, among many ways, to listen to God’s word and live out our response in word and deed. May we be among those who have responded to God’s word and know the joys of peace of God’s realm.

(Fr. Dwayne Thoman)