



Today's gospel can be a very difficult parable to understand. Of course, the original setting is again Jesus getting after the chief priests and elders of the people to have a change of mind and heart, and to expand their understanding of the Kingdom of God in terms of mercy and compassion.

What touches my heart is Jesus' parable about the wedding feast. It reminds me of a wedding many years ago when I was pastor at Saint Mary's in Wilton.

The bride was a member of the Wilton parish. The groom a member of the parish is West Liberty. Everything was set for the wedding in Wilton – until it started to rain. It was 2008 and rivers were overflowing. Highways and interstates were closed. Due to quite a few factors, the couple decided to have their wedding in West Liberty instead of Wilton – during their regular Saturday afternoon Mass.

You can imagine the surprise on people's faces when the opening procession unexpectedly included the bridal party! The assembly wasn't dressed for a wedding, but they certainly enjoyed the celebration.

At the end of the Mass the couple invited everyone to their reception, no matter how they were dressed. Just come and enjoy! Then, as we left the church, the rain had stopped. In the sky was a beautiful rainbow.

It was certainly one of the most amazing and beautiful weddings I have experienced.

In the gospel the one person who didn't wear a wedding garment was not admitted to the banquet. Why? Because there was no change of heart. In Jesus' time there was a whole closet of wedding garments available for the guests at the banquet hall. This person would not accept the generosity of the host. He just wanted his own way. No conversion of mind or heart.

The garment was more than a piece of cloth. The real garment was the attitude of the mind and heart. For my wedding couple, their garment was not the gown or the tux – it was their attitude of loving gratitude and hospitality.

When we were baptized, we were clothed with Christ. We were called then, and still called now, to wear the garment of loving God and loving our neighbor. That's the challenge. And with God's grace we wear it in our minds and in our hearts every day.

We have been invited to the most blessed banquet of Jesus today – and we have responded. We don't have to be concerned about the physical garments we wear. We just need to be grateful for the spiritual garment we have received and wear -- enjoying the feast of Jesus' unconditional love – and, with the power of the Holy Spirit, putting his love into practice.