

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius
A sermon preached by Father Bradford on The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
October 12, 2014

+

Our Lord tells us there are *four different categories* of individuals in their response to the call to follow Him. The first category includes those who make light of the invitation. They are the ones who are so full of themselves they show no concern for the claims of God. But notice Our Lord takes no notice of them! They pass out of His parable without comment.

The second category includes those who *actively oppose* God's will. (These are the same people described as *wicked tenants* in last Sunday's gospel.) While ignorance in the people first invited drew no condemnation from the Lord, the combination of ignorance, pride, *and violence*, always comes home to roost. Just as in last week's parable, these people come to a violent end.

The third category shows the response of the Catholic Church. Here is a description of the Church Militant containing as she does a mixture of good and bad. (In another famous parable the Church is compared to a field with both wheat and tares.) The only requirement made of these people is that they answer the call of the King, *and* they honor the occasion by presenting themselves in proper attire. *There is no question of personal merit.* No one earned the right to an invitation! The King's invitation was *pervasive. Come one; come all.* That is a description of Christ's Church Militant.

This is where the parable begins to get uncomfortable for us! Among those who accept the call, one person was found without a proper wedding garment. Forget the notion this is a matter of a poor soul who cannot afford a proper suit of clothes! "*God sees not as man sees but looks on the heart.*" What is being pointed out is there are some Christians who, while enjoying all the privileges of the Catholic Church, yet treat it all with indifference. To them the gospel is not worth the proper garment of a serious-minded response to the call of Christ. Their response does not issue in the pursuit of holiness of life. In the parable Jesus tells it is suggested this man might have been better off *to stay away* rather than have insulted the host by coming in his every-day clothes.

Here then is God's view of things, and *it is the only view that counts.* Christ did not revile the first people who rejected the invitation out of hand. They simply passed

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius
A sermon preached by Father Bradford on The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
October 12, 2014

+

off the stage and out of the parable. How Almighty God deals with such people is left to speculation. But *this* man accepted the invitation and then treated the whole affair lightly. He is the man who actually tries to enter the Kingdom of God without cleaning up his act. And we are told that he was cast into a very unhappy place.

At the end of the parable the King came to meet his guests. The Lord is telling us Almighty God *takes particular notice* of those who profess His holy religion and who have a place and their names recorded in His visible Church. You and I must accept the lesson of Christ's parable. He gave it so we would! Let us resolve to cultivate the gifts of God that we may understand and take to heart their true value for our lives. Let ours be a *strenuous faithfulness*. And then when the King appears to meet His guests and we say, "Lord, I am not worthy," Blessed Lord Jesus will give the gracious response He used in another parable, "*Friend, go up higher.*"