

NOVEMBER 4 2025 DEACON ROBERT KINGHORN

You know, it's about 20 years ago, I was talking to a good friend of mine who was about to get married. He was telling me about what it was that he saw in the woman he was soon to marry. One of the things he said about her still sticks with me to this day. He said, "Do you know what it was that attracted me to her? She saw something in me that no one else could see." Isn't that beautiful?

And in some ways, this could be the theme for today's Gospel that we just heard.

In the Old Testament, there are many different images of what the coming of God would be like at the last times. Everyone had their own idea. But one of the most common images was that of a messianic banquet—a great feast where God would come again, and we would all sit and eat together with Him. So when Jesus was giving this parable, this is the image the people had in mind. The Jewish people believed that they alone were invited to this great messianic banquet.

So, Jesus' message today was directed to them—but it also applies to us in many ways. One of the messages I take from this reading is that a banquet is a time of joy. You go to a banquet to celebrate, to enjoy yourself. And one of the lessons we must often remind ourselves of is that God is bringing us to joy—the joy of His kingdom.

You know, there are a lot of people who go around with sad Christian faces. I once heard a man say to people like that, "My God's a happy God. I'm kind of sorry about yours." That always makes me smile.

But you heard what happened in the parable. When it was time for the banquet, all the people who had been invited began to make excuses. One after another. One said, “I bought some land and have to go try it out. I can’t come.” His excuse? Business comes first in my life.

Another said, “I’ve bought five yoke of oxen, and I have to go test them.” His excuse? There’s something new in my life—God can wait until later. I’ll pay attention eventually.

And the third said, “I just got married! What do you expect me to do?” His excuse implies that God doesn’t belong in his marriage. Each one had what they thought was a good reason, but all were excuses that placed God second.

So what happened next? The king in the parable said, “Go out into the streets and lanes of the city. Bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.” These were the very people whom society—and especially the Jewish people of that time—believed were cursed, outcasts, unworthy even of association. And yet, these are the ones the king brought in to fill his banquet hall.

Why did he do that? Because he saw something in each one of them that no one else could see. Isn’t that a joyful message of the Gospel today? A God like this—who would leave a God like this? A God who cares for us so deeply, who looks at us with eyes of love and compassion.

This, I believe, is a message for each one of us. We are called to this Eucharist today. And why are we called? Because God sees something in each one of us that no one else can see. We are invited to the Eucharistic banquet we share together—with our friends, with our families, with God Himself.

Let me end with a story.

Last Thursday, as always, I was down on the streets of our city with the people who live there—many of whom struggle with addiction. There's one area where most of the addicts congregate. It's a more dangerous part of the city; you never quite know what's going to happen there.

I was walking by, and there were about ten people lying or standing around. I stopped, as I always do, and greeted them: "Hello, how are you?" One man stood up, came over to me, and said, "Let me shake your hand. I want to shake your hand." Then he took my other hand, and you know what he did? He prayed for me.

He said a beautiful prayer, calling upon the Holy Spirit to be with me. "I want the Spirit to be with you in the work you're doing," he said, "because sometimes that can be dangerous. I want the Spirit to stay with you and protect you on the street."

You know what? People walking by this man might look at him and think, "Just another addict." But God sees something in this man that no one else could see.

And that, I think, is the great message today. When God looks at all of us—all of us—He sees something that no one else can see.

Now think about that. What is it that God sees in you that no one else can see?