Gospel Homily — Trinity 19 : ***Matthew 22.1–14 & Philippians 4.1–9***

The Invitation, the Garment & the Life that Follows… **Fr. Mike**

There is something wonderfully extravagant about a wedding. Even today, when we receive an invitation, we know it signals joy, celebration, and belonging. In Jesus' time, a royal wedding was the greatest honour imaginable. So when Jesus tells a story about a king preparing a wedding banquet for his son, his listeners would have understood immediately: this is a picture of God's generosity, God's joy, and God's desire to gather people into the life of His Kingdom.

But the parable does not unfold as expected. The invited guests refuse to come. Some even ignore the invitation; others mistreat the messengers. The king's generosity is met with indifference and hostility. Consequently, the invitation is widened — thrown open to anyone and everyone on the streets**, "both good and bad,"** until the hall is filled.

This is the Gospel in miniature. **God's invitation is astonishingly wide.** It reaches beyond boundaries, beyond histories, beyond failures. It's not restricted to the deserving — because of course none of us are. It is simply offered **to all who will come**.

Yet the parable does not end there. There is that difficult moment: the guest without a wedding garment. He has accepted the invitation, but he has not prepared himself. He wants the feast without the transformation. And Jesus uses this moment to make a crucial point: namely that **the invitation is free, but the response is deadly serious**.

The wedding garment is not about clothing. It's about the **heart**. It is about the life **shaped by grace** — repentance, humility, mercy, holiness — the marks of someone who has allowed God's invitation to change them.

The parable gives us two truths we must hold together.

First, God's generosity is boundless. The hall is filled with people who never expected to be invited. The Kingdom is open to the broken, the searching, the weary, the hopeful, the doubtful. No one is beyond the reach of God's welcome.

Second, discipleship is not casual. To accept the invitation is to step into a life that reflects Christ. It is to put on the garment of grace — not perfectly, not without struggle, but sincerely.

"Many are invited, but few are chosen." Not because God is selective, but because many decline the invitation, and some accept it without **allowing it to change them**.

So what does this mean for us today?

It means that every one of us is invited — deeply, personally, joyfully — into the life of God. It means the King genuinely desires our presence at His feast. It means grace is offered *before we have earned anything*. And it means **our response truly matters**. We are called to clothe ourselves in Christ — in compassion, forgiveness, generosity, justice, and the quiet courage of faith.

And this is where Paul's words to the Philippians become the perfect companion to the Gospel.

Paul writes to a community he loves: **"Stand firm in the Lord."** But he immediately shows what standing firm looks like. It is not stubbornness or rigidity. It is a life shaped by **grace** — the very garment Jesus speaks of in the parable.

Paul describes the wedding garment in practical terms:

- **Rejoice in the Lord always** — not shallow cheerfulness, but deep confidence in God's invitation.
- **Let your gentleness be known to everyone** — the outward sign of a heart clothed in Christ.
- **Do not worry about anything, but pray about everything** — the life of trust that keeps us close to the King who invites us.
- **Whatever is true, honourable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable — think on these things** — the inner garment of righteousness woven through daily choices.
- **Keep on doing what you have learned and received** — the steady discipleship that shows we have not only entered the feast but embraced the life it offers.

The Gospel gives us the invitation. Philippians gives us the garment. And together they give us the eternal promise: **"The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."**

We are called then, to be a people preparing for a wedding — not simply drifting through life unprepared. So today, hear the invitation again. Come to the feast. Come with **gratitude**. Come with **openness**. Come ready to be **changed**. And let God clothe you in the life of His Kingdom. Amen!