

NT-MT44

10.11.20

A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew by St. Augustine ¹

All believers are familiar with the story of the wedding of the king's son and the banquet that followed it, and of how the Lord's table was thrown open to all comers. When everyone was seated *the master of the house came in to see the guests, and among them he noticed one without a wedding garment. So he said to him, "My friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?"*

Now what precisely does this mean? Let us try to find out what it is that some believers have, but which the wicked lack, for that will be what the wedding garment is.

Can it be one of the sacraments? Hardly, for these, as we know, are common to good and bad alike. Take baptism for example. It is true that no one comes to God except through baptism, but not every baptized person comes to him. We cannot take this sacrament as the wedding garment, then, for it is a robe worn not only by good people but also by wicked people. Perhaps, then, it is our altar that is meant, or at least what we receive from it. But we know that many who approach the altar eat and drink to their own damnation. Well, then, maybe it is fasting? The wicked can fast too. What about going to church? Some bad people also go to church.

Whatever can this wedding garment be, then? For an answer we must go to the Apostle who says: *The purpose of our command is to arouse the love that springs from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and a genuine faith.* There is your wedding garment. It is not love of just any kind. Many people of bad conscience appear to love one another, but you will not find in them *the love that springs from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and a genuine faith.* Only that kind of love is the wedding garment.

If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, says the Apostle, but have no love, I am nothing but a booming gong or a clashing cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, if I have all knowledge and understand all mysteries, if I have faith strong enough to move mountains, but have no love, I am nothing. In other words, even with all these gifts I am nothing without Christ. Does that mean that prophecy has no value and that knowledge of mysteries is worthless? No, they are not worthless but I am, if I possess them but have no love. But can the lack of one good thing rob so many others of their value? Yes, without love my confession of the name of Christ even by shedding my blood or offering my body to be burnt will avail me nothing, for I may do this out of a desire for glory. That such things can be endured for the sake of empty show without any real love for God the Apostle also declares. Listen to him: *If I give away all I have to the poor, if I hand over my body to be burnt, but have no love, it will avail me nothing.* So this is what the

wedding garment is. Examine yourselves to see whether you possess it. If you do, your place at the Lord's table is secure.

[1](#)Journey with the Fathers – Year A – New City Press – NY -1999 – pg 132

The mission of Solomon: a reading from a book by Adrienne von Speyr. 1

Solomon's mission is one of the Spirit; as such, it correlates with David's mission, which was oriented toward [the second Person of the triune God,] the Son. Y Solomon requests from God the very thing that God is most happy to give: the godly. Y This leaves [God] in the position of being able to grant precisely that which he most enjoys giving: the Spirit. Y Both [David and Solomon,] father and son, have the task of praying, of singing, of recognizing the divine and transmitting it to later generations in a form that they themselves have given it. Through Solomon's saying and songs, posterity is to gain an insight into how fully he was recognized by the Spirit, how often what he himself recognized was in the Spirit, how the Spirit passed through him and enabled him to comprehend things in a way far exceeding the understanding proper to the Old Covenant.

Solomon's mission, which consists in the fact that he is seized by the Spirit and discloses this Spirit to his people, to his friends and enemies, by simultaneously capturing him in words - that mission is rounded off through the building of the temple. What has been captured is then transferred beyond words into the finality of stone, so that the whole people is seized by a new fear of God, by respect and love; undergoes conversion in a new way; and is enabled to rejoice, through a tangible presence, in the splendor of God=s Word, in the precision of his directives, in the beauty of his abode. These formations in word and stone are meant to lend God's Spirit a visibility for which the Spirit himself strives but which is grasped by Solomon and actualized in a universally valid way.

When he pleads for understanding and insight, he knows that God will fulfill his request. But in just what measure he does not know, and he must learn through his own experience that God=s measure is one of superabundance. He receives what he wishes: and this accords with his capturing of the Spirit. But beyond that, he receives the Spirit=s quality of being ever greater: and this accords with the astonishment that overcomes him when he sees the concrete expressions of his mind and his wisdom. This twofold image of the Spirit in him, namely, as a capturing and as an astonishment, accords with his whole mission. Moreover, in

the words he utters, in the sayings and songs he composes, in the temple he erects, his spirit comes into contact with something supremely intimate, which overpowers him. The image of whatever he has grasped is always immediately surpassed by the image of what is no longer graspable; there is the encounter here of God with man, of the supernatural with the natural, and ultimately of the ever greater God with Solomon's spirit, which wishes to grow greater through God.

A reading about the joys of heaven, from a letter of St. Alphonsus Liguori. ¹

While we remain on earth, it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand or describe the happiness of heaven. One reason for this is that we think and imagine only in terms of earthly enjoyments. If a horse were made capable of reasoning and then were promised a rich feast from its owner, the animal would envision a meal made up of the choicest hay and oats. Our concept of heaven is formed under the same limitations. In heaven we will be totally enthralled with a beauty far surpassing anything we have experienced here on earth. In heaven we will be sure that we love God and he loves us.

What is more, this love of ours will be constantly extended by the ever increasing knowledge that we will gain of the magnitude of God's love for us. We will see how God showed this love, for example, by becoming man and dying on the cross for us and by giving us himself in the holy Eucharist.

Also, we will see how many graces God gave us in our lifetime; how he delivered us from so many temptations; how much patience he showed by enduring our many weaknesses and sins; how merciful he was to us in giving us so many lights, so many chances, so much love.

In heaven we will forever enjoy a kind of happiness which, even as eternity progresses, will always be as new as at the first moment we began to enjoy it. We shall be always satisfied, yet always craving. We will be forever hungry, yet always sated with infinite delights, because desires in heaven produce no pain, and pleasure in heaven never becomes boring.

¹ From *Preparation for Death*, edited by Norman J. Muckerman, CSSR, Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1998.

OT-1KG27
10.14.20

Solomon Conscripted Labor from all Israel From a Study “On the Temple” by St Bede ¹

The first thing to note here is that it was not for nothing that Solomon chose workmen from all Israel, nor was there any section of the people from which men fit for such a task were not taken, because, of course, priests nowadays are not to be chosen from the stock of Aaron alone; rather people are to be sought from the whole Church who, whether by example or word, are competent to build the house of the Lord. And wherever they are found they are to be promoted to the office of teachers without any exception of persons. And when such people are ordained to instruct the infidel and those who are to be called into the joint pastorate of the Church, they are sent as energetic and picked men, as it were, to hew in Lebanon the materials for the temple. And indeed the number of thirty thousand, which was the tally of the hewers of wood, can be aptly applied figuratively to those who are perfect in the faith of the Holy Trinity, because it is most appropriate for teachers.

Furthermore the men of Biblos (i.e. the Gibrilites) prepared wood and stone to build the house. Biblos is a city in Phoenicia that Ezekiel mentions: “Your skilled men, Tyre, were your pillars. The elders of Biblos and its skilled men”, for which city in Hebrew is written Gobel or Gebal, which means “defining” or “limiting”. This word is very appropriate for those who prepare people’s hearts for the spiritual edifice that is built of the virtues of the soul. For they are only equal to the task of teaching their hearers faith and the works of righteousness when they themselves have first been instructed by the sacred page and thoroughly learned from a clear definition of the truth which belief one must hold and on what path of virtue one must walk. For one who does not know what is definitely catholic faith is wasting his time assuming the office of teacher, and those who try to teach others the norm that they themselves have not learned do not build a sanctuary for the Lord but ruin for themselves.

¹ On the Temple by St Bede – Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture –O. T. - vol. V – pg 27
Intervarsity Press – Downers Grove, IL -

10SN1505

10.15.20

From a Work by St. Teresa of Avila ²

If Christ Jesus dwells in a person as his friend and noble leader, that one can endure all things, for Christ helps and strengthens us and never abandons us. He is a true friend. And I clearly see that if we expect to please him and receive an abundance of his graces, God desires that these graces must come to us from the hands of Christ, through his most sacred humanity, in which God takes delight.

Many, many times I have perceived this through experience. The Lord has told it to me. I have definitely seen that we must enter by this gate if we wish his Sovereign Majesty to reveal to us great and hidden mysteries. A person should desire no other path, even if he is at the summit of contemplation; on this road he walks safely. All blessings come to us through Our Lord. He will teach us, for in beholding his life we find that he is the best example.

What more do we desire from such a friend at our side? Unlike our friends in the world, he will never abandon us when we are troubled or distressed. Blessed is the one who truly loves him and always keeps him near. Let us consider the glorious St. Paul: it seems that no other name fell from his lips than that of Jesus, because the name of Jesus was fixed and embedded in his heart. Once I had come to understand this truth, I carefully considered the lives of the saints, the great contemplatives, and found that they took no other path: Francis, Anthony of Padua, Bernard, Catherine of sienna. A person must walk along this path in freedom, placing himself in God's hands. If God should desire to raise us to the position of one who is an intimate and shares his secrets, we ought to accept this gladly.

Whenever we think of Christ we should recall the love that led him to bestow on us so many graces and favors, and also the great love God showed in giving us in Christ a pledge of his love; for love calls for love in return. Let us strive to keep this always before our eyes and to rouse ourselves to love him. For if at some time the Lord should grant us the grace of impressing his love on our hearts, all will become easy for us and we shall accomplish great things quickly and without effort.

² The Liturgy of the Hours - vol IV – Catholic Book Publishing Co – New York – 1975 – pg 1483

10SN1602

10.16.20

The Life of St. Hedwig from Butler's Lives of the Saints ³

Hedwig was born in Bavaria about the year 1174, the daughter of Berthold, count of Andechs. When she was only twelve she was married to Henry, duke of Silesia. Together they founded a large number of religious houses, the best known of which was a convent for Cistercian nuns at Trebnitz, near Breslau in modern Poland, the first convent for women in Silesia. These foundations helped both to develop the religious life of the people and to spread a common German culture throughout their lands. They also established hospitals and a house for lepers. Their seventh and last child was born in 1209, and Hedwig persuaded her husband to take a mutual vow of chastity. They lived apart, with Hedwig taking up residence close to the nunnery at Trebnitz, and often sharing the austere life of the nuns. She recommended fasting to those who wanted to live holier lives, saying that it could "master concupiscence, lift up the soul, confirm it in the paths of virtue, and prepare a fine reward for the Christian.

Much of the rest of Hedwig's life was spent in trying to keep peace between her warring sons Henry and Conrad and in attempts to make peace between her husband and his enemies. When Henry died in 1238, she comforted those who mourned him with the words, "Would you oppose the will of God? Our lives are his; our will is whatever he is pleased to ordain, whether our own death or that of our friends." She took the habit at Trebnitz but did not take any religious vows, remaining free to administer her property for the good of the poor. We are told that she took great care to instruct the uneducated in their religion, on one occasion having an old woman share a room with her so that they could go through the Our Father together whenever there was a free moment. After ten weeks of patient teaching, the old woman could repeat and understand the prayer.

When her son Henry II was killed in 1240 fighting the Tartar invaders, Hedwig knew of his death three days before a messenger arrived from the battlefield. Other miracles were attributed to her; she cured a blind man, for example, and had the gift of prophecy, foretelling her own death in October 1243. She was canonized in 1267, and her feast was extended to the Western Church in 1706.

³ Butler's Lives of the Saints – New Full Edition – October – The Liturgical Press – Collegeville, MN - 1997

10SN1703

10.17.20

From a Letter to the Romans by St. Ignatius, bishop and martyr ⁴

I am writing to all the churches to let it be known that I will gladly die for God if only you do not stand in my way. I plead with you: show me no untimely kindness. Let me be food for the wild beasts, for they are my way to God. I am God's wheat and shall be ground by their teeth so that I may become God's pure bread. Pray to Christ for me that the animals will be the means of making me a sacrificial victim for God.

No earthly pleasures, no kingdoms of this world can benefit me in any way. I prefer death in Christ Jesus to power over the farthest limits of the earth. He who died in place of us is the one object of my quest. He who rose for our sakes is my one desire. The time for my birth is close at hand. Forgive me, my brothers. Do not stand in the way of my birth to real life; do not wish me stillborn. My desire is to belong to God. Do not, then, hand me back to the world. Do not try to tempt me with material things. Let me attain pure light. Only on my arrival there can I be fully a human being. Give me the privilege of imitating the passion of my God. If you have him in your heart, you will understand what I wish. You will sympathize with me because you will know what urges me on.

The prince of this world is determined to lay hold of me and to undermine my will which is intent on God. Let none of you here help him; instead show yourselves on my side, which is also God's side. Do not talk about Jesus Christ as long as you love this world. Do not harbor envious thoughts. And supposing I should see you, if then I beg you to intervene on my behalf, do not believe what I say. Believe instead what I am now writing to you. For though I am alive as I write to you, still my real desire is to die. My love for this life has been crucified, and there is no yearning in me for any earthly thing. Rather within me is the living water which says deep inside me: "Come to the Father." I no longer take pleasure in perishable food or in the delights of this world. I want only God's bread, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, formed of the seed of David, and for drink I crave his blood, which is love that cannot perish.

I am no longer willing to live a merely human life, and you can bring about my wish if you will. Please, then, do me this favor, so that you in turn may meet with equal kindness. Put briefly, this is my request: believe what I am saying to you. Jesus Christ himself will make it clear to you that I am saying the truth. Only truth can come from that mouth by which the Father has truly spoken. Pray for me that I may obtain my desire. I have not written to you as a mere man would, but as one who knows the mind of God. If I am condemned to suffer, I take it that you wish me well. If my case is postponed, I can only think that you wish me harm.

⁴ The Liturgy of the Hours – vol. IV – Catholic Book Publishing Co – New York – 1975 – pg 1490

