

Thursday, October 12, 2017- Weekly letter from Fr. John Allison

Dear members and friends of our parish family,

I write to you this week after having celebrated, as part of the Parish Partnership, this past Sunday's Eucharist with the good people of St. Saviour's. It was a joyful occasion and I was most pleased to offer God's peace on behalf of Church of Our Father. I was equally pleased to hear of the warm reception offered to Mother Kathleen as she celebrated the Eucharist with you. Such fellowship and sharing is a unique gift in a world so often divided.

On this upcoming 19th Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew (22:1-14) offers us Jesus' third parable in response to the temple authorities and elders who have confronted him following his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his subsequent cleansing of the temple. Like the first two parables, the parable of the wedding banquet is directed at those religious leaders who refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah and questioned his authority to teach in Jerusalem. As last week, the parable functions as an allegory. The wedding banquet itself symbolizes the Messianic banquet with the father representing God and the son, Jesus. Those who might have been expected to respond to the Divine invitation showed only contempt for it; while those who seemed disqualified accepted and were welcomed. At its simplest, this parable shows us that God often uses the most unlikely candidates for service, and if we do not heed the call, God's work will be carried out by others. We may also infer that those who think they are heirs to God's kingdom, as did the religious leaders to whom the parable was addressed, may be rejected if they put other concerns first. The question for us is how do we respond to the invitation of God?

Our final lectionary reading from reading Paul's Letter to the Philippians (4:1-9) encourages us to "Rejoice in the Lord always." Paul is writing from prison to his beloved community in Philippi and here concludes his heartfelt response to the conflict in which the community had become embroiled. Paul's advice centers on the importance of prayer and is a reminder for us all of the nearness of God. Note that 4:7 is the inspiration for the final blessing I offer at the end of our Eucharist.

Finally, I want to bring to your attention a new feature on the church website and on our Facebook page. Audio of my sermons, both Sunday and Wednesday, are available each week. Special thanks to Lena, our Parish Administrator, for her diligence in making this available.

Faithfully,

John+