

## 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday, Cycle A, October 15, 2017

Which is healthier, more enjoyable? To grab a bite of fast food, or to share a leisurely meal with friends and family? Which is better? And which one does God invite us to?

In the gospel reading, the king sends out invitations to the wedding feast for his son. Some ignore the invitation, so the king issues a blanket invitation to as many people as he can find.

We can identify the king with God. The son corresponds to Jesus Christ. And the wedding feast corresponds to the wedding feast of heaven. That is what we are all invited to.

Whenever we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, we are given a foretaste of heaven. It gives us an inkling of what we can expect in heaven. It is meant to be a banquet that we share with our family and friends. It is not fast food that we gobble down, so that we can move on to the things that really matter to us, in a mad rush to the church parking lot.

God is inviting us to this wonderful meal in which we encounter his Son, Jesus Christ. We share him with those around us, our friends and family. That sharing lies at the very heart of the Eucharist.

Because of this extraordinary gift from God, our hearts are filled with gratitude. We thank God for all the many gifts we have received, especially for the gift of his Son. In fact, the word "Eucharist" itself means "thanksgiving."

We thank God in our worship, and also through our gifts of time, talent and treasure. That is the meaning of stewardship. It is a way of life that recognizes that everything we have is a gift from God, and which calls us to share those gifts out of gratitude to God.

Sometimes, when I look out at the church parking lot, and see all the cars there, I wonder what's going on? What are all those people doing? So many activities take place at our parish, that I can't keep track of them all. And not all of the parish activities take place here at the church. Some are at the school, or some other site, for example, the bowling alley where the youth group went recently, or the St. Mary's food kitchen where parishioners will be going Friday.

The ministry fair going on this weekend can give us a taste of those activities. Maybe you are already involved in a parish ministry and not interested in taking on another. You can learn about the other ministries of our parish. Or, if you are not already involved in a ministry, perhaps you will become familiar with the one that God is calling you to.

God calls all of us to ministry, to serve others. That is basic to our identity as Christians, as Catholics. That is part of how we show our gratitude to God, for all that we have received. It is part of the response that we make to the invitation that God has sent to us. God has invited us to the banquet. How will we respond to the invitation?