

# WELCOME TO ST. JOSEPH – ST. LAWRENCE PARISH

“Two Churches, One Parish”

Growing as Disciples of Jesus; Making Disciples for Jesus  
Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time – October 11, 2020

St. Joseph of the Valley: 31151 207<sup>th</sup> Street, (Rural) Leavenworth, KS 66048  
St. Lawrence: 211 West Riley, Easton, KS 66020  
Parish Mailing Address: P.O. Box 129, Easton, KS 66020

Father Francis Bakyor, Pastor  
Easton Rectory Phone: 913-773-5712  
Father's cell: 913-235-6837  
Father's Email: francis.bakyor@yahoo.com

Website: [www.sjslparish.org](http://www.sjslparish.org)  
St. Joseph of the Valley Hall: 913-758-9225  
St. Lawrence Hall & Fax: 913-773-8401  
“LIKE” us on Facebook for new announcements

## THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE:

TUES	Oct 13	07:00 pm	STL	For our priests and deacons
Adoration will follow Mass until 7:30 p.m. - CANCELLED				
THUR	Oct 15	07:00 pm	SJV	Parishioners of SJ-SL
SAT	Oct 17	05:00 pm	SJV	Mary Gwartney †
SUN	Oct 18	09:00 am	STL	Jack Rogers †

Confessions: SAT-4:30 pm at SJV; SUN-8:30 at STL

## PLEASE NOTE:

Attendance for Masses - limited to 25% of the building's seating capacity— 30-75 at St. Lawrence and 30-45 at St. Joseph of the Valley. We will be offering four Masses per week. Please do not feel obligated to attend weekend Masses — weekday Masses will work just fine if it fits into your family's schedule. You may sign-up for Masses online at

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040A4AA9AB2AA1FA7-stjosephst>. Please see online info for restrictions and guidance.

**Please pray for the sick, especially:** Phil Bell, Susie Beying, Jennifer Brushwood, Carl Davidson, George Dean, Carolyn DeMaranville, Vince Eimer, Tom Flack, Tina Gaspard, Ronnie Gast, Alan Halstead, Marly Heim, Frank Heintzelman, Jim Heintzelman, Lydia Heintzelman, Melanie Herken, Jon Highfill, Trista Highfill, Mark Hund, Arlene Jennings, Wendi Johnston, Michael Jones, Elmer Karczewski, Phillip Leon, Kelly Long, Joyce Lowe, Mary Meinert, Jeni Mettelstedt, Don Navinsky, Kay Nocktonick, Dannie Phillips, Adam Pineau, Mike Pursel, Mary M. Ruhlman, Kim Sachse, Tanner Siebenmorgen, Julie Simonis, Jim (Poly) Sloan, Gary Stafford, Aaron Welch, Louise Wistuba and Nick Yuska.

**Prayer List for Our Soldiers:** ARMY: 1LT Daniel Broaddus, Pvt. David Crook, Lexi (Skaggs) Hargis, Major Bryan Herken, SPC Derrick Hunt, SGT Colby Seifert, William Stradley. AIRFORCE: E-4 Robert W. Herken, TSGT Scott Loecher, E-3 Connor Schuler, A1C Noah Tattershall. NAVY: ADDA Jason P. Herken, YNS1 (SS) Kevin Lansing.

**Prayer for Vocations:** Brother Seelos (Tyler Lunsford).

## OUR PARISH NEWS

**COLLECTION:** Thank you for your gifts to our parish! Collections received was \$1,372.10, including \$25 for utilities. Last week's on-line collection was \$184.23. Thank you for your generosity.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:** We are soliciting volunteers who would like to serve as our Parish Director of Religious Education (DRE), leading the effort to teach our children about their Catholic faith. The DRE performs a number of crucial functions: coordinating CCD enrollment and the necessary paperwork, developing the CCD calendar, recruiting and assisting teachers and other volunteers, working with the Archdiocese and teachers in curriculum development and resource procurement, communicating with parents and the parish council, and ensuring all teachers are Virtus trained. Please prayerfully consider this incredibly fulfilling role within our parish. We are also open to co-DREs if that is an approach that works for you. The parish council does not anticipate starting CCD classes before October, allowing the new DRE time to prepare. If you are interested please contact: Jason Nichols, phone: 913-683-2661 or email: [jnichols@dfamilk.com](mailto:jnichols@dfamilk.com) OR Sharon Wagner, phone: 913-683-4495 or email: [w5cattle@aol.com](mailto:w5cattle@aol.com).

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:** We are searching for a volunteer to clean the rectory twice a month. POC is Sharon Wagner, phone: 913-683-4495 or email: [w5cattle@aol.com](mailto:w5cattle@aol.com).

**SECOND COLLECTION** will be held the weekend of Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> for World Mission Sunday. We appreciate your generosity.

**MANY THANKS** to the Easton Lions Club for the \$250 donation to St. Joseph of the Valley Cemetery and the St. Lawrence Cemetery to help with the upkeep of the Cemeteries.

**THANK YOU** for your generous support in last week's Peter's Pence Collection! Our contributions will be combined with those from our brothers and sisters around the world to help Pope Francis provide essential relief to people in need. If you missed the collection, it is not too late to give. Visit [www.usccb.org/nationalcollections](http://www.usccb.org/nationalcollections).

## OTHER NEWS IN OUR ARCHDIOCESE

**IT IS CALLED ABORTION:** We agonized about the shootings in our schools over past years and we ask why this happened. Hasn't it occurred to you that by our own laws we have refused God entrance in our public schools, thereby opening wide the doors to Satan and his evil ways. We hear about the memorials of the Holocaust, which was perpetrated by the Nazi regime, and are saddened. We must remember, they say, so it doesn't happen again. We read about the genocide going on in parts of Africa and are appalled.

We here in the U.S. have our own genocide going on. It's called Abortion! We have evil laws upholding the killing of the unborn babies. We have politicians spouting their determination to uphold this evil. Why? What are they thinking? Evil begets evil! They should be upholding God's law! There again we have removed God's law from our minds and hearts and let the evil of abortion in. We turn a deaf ear to the cries of the babies. We are blind to the truth - abortion is murder. When will we ever learn?!

**SACRED HEART-ST. CASIMIR FALL FEST:** On Saturday, **October 17th** from 5:30 pm- 7 pm at Sacred Heart Church, 1401 2nd Avenue, Leavenworth, we will have Trunk or Treating for the kids (all costumed kids will get a free pumpkin), and we will be selling pumpkins, hamburgers/brats/hotdog sack lunch meals for \$6/\$5, and doing a silent auction and cash raffle. Sunday, **October 18th**, from 9:45 am until 1 pm, we will have free coffee & donuts and continue the pumpkin sales & raffles.

**"A CATHOLIC CONVERSATION ABOUT COVID 19":** Fr. Ted Pacholczyk will speak on this subject at Holy Angels Catholic Church, 15438 Leavenworth Rd., Basehor, Ks. on Sunday, **October 18** at 7:00 p.m. Masks and social distancing required.

**OPEN GATE SERIES AT PRAIRIE STAR RANCH** Did you know that Prairie Star Ranch, home of Camp Tekakwitha, is open year-round? Are you looking for opportunities to get out of the house and enjoy some COVID-friendly time together as a family? On select Saturdays in the months of September and October, the gates of Prairie Star Ranch will be open for families to enjoy some casual, open-air fun. Come fish (bring your own poles!), picnic, hike, and more! On each Open Gate day, a different staff-facilitated camp activity will be offered for a small fee. Otherwise, the experience is free, and donations are welcome. Gates will be open from 10am to 4pm, and no registration is required. Upcoming Open Gate Days include **Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>**. For a full schedule of event dates, the staff-facilitated activity for each weekend, our COVID-19 precautions and more, visit our website at [archkck.org/ranch](http://archkck.org/ranch).

**XAVIER CATHOLIC SCHOOL:** Are you still searching for the right school environment for the 2020-21 school year? Xavier Catholic School is operating 5 days a week in person. We have limited openings in our preschool, 1st grade, and grades 3-8. Please call 913-682-7801 to schedule a tour.

**UPCOMING RETREATS AT CHRIST'S PEACE HOUSE OF PRAYER:** Save the date(s)!

**Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>:** LOUIS AND ZELIE MARTIN FAMILY SANCTITY RETREAT: reflects on the importance of Family Sanctity. Retreat info: <https://www.archkck.org/cpp/christs-peace-house-of-prayer-calendar?cid=38&ceid=3376&cerid=0&cdt=11%2f6%2f2020>

**Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>,** Advent Silent Retreat. Retreat info: <https://www.archkck.org/cpp/christs-peace-house-of-prayer-calendar?cid=38&ceid=3378&cerid=0&cdt=12%2f4%2f2020>

**Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021:** Spiritual Reflection & Planning Retreat. Retreat info: <https://www.archkck.org/cpp/christs-peace-house-of-prayer-calendar?cid=38&ceid=3377&cerid=0&cdt=1%2f8%2f2021>

For more information, contact [info@christspeace.com](mailto:info@christspeace.com) or 913-773-8255.

**STEWARDSHIP:** “My God will supply whatever you need...” (Philippians 4:19) God really does provide for those who are grateful and generous. This is very difficult for people that don't live a stewardship lifestyle to believe. People are skeptical and say it's just coincidence. If you are skeptical, try living a stewardship lifestyle for just one month – be generous with your gifts of time in prayer, talent in charitable works and treasure and see how God provides for your needs.

**2020 ELECTION NOVENA** – The USCCB is offering an Election Novena to help Catholics prepare for the upcoming election. For nine consecutive days, **Monday, October 26 through Tuesday, November 3**, participants will be encouraged to pray one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be for the day's intention. A closing prayer for elected leaders will be offered on day 10, Wednesday, November 4. To sign up to receive the Novena daily be email, please visit <https://www.usccb.org/2020-election-novena> and scroll to the bottom of the page

**PLEASE** – There are a large number of other Archdiocesan announcements that could not fit in the space available. They will be posted on our church website listed above as a 2<sup>nd</sup> page to this bulletin.

Bulletin Items: Contact Kim Sachse, 913-775-0690 Or Email [Sjslparish@gmail.com](mailto:Sjslparish@gmail.com). Mass intentions may be scheduled with Kim as well. MUST SUBMIT BY 9 pm TUES FOR INCLUSION.

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**(FOR POSTING ON THE CHURCH INTERNET SITE)**

**AMAZING PARISH:** Registration is filling fast for the upcoming Amazing Parish Conference hosted by our Archdiocese on **Oct. 19-21<sup>st</sup>** at the Overland Park Convention Center. Parish teams from around the country have already signed up to take part in this valuable training! Register Here: <https://amazingparish.org/>

What does an Amazing Parish look like? If you're ready to build an effective leadership team and improve the organizational health of your parish, we hope you'll join us. Amazing Parish gives busy pastors and their teams the tools they need to transform their parishes - moving from maintenance mode to mission communities that are truly alive! For more information: Parish Journey – A Pastor's First Steps, <https://amazingparish.org/get-started/#firststeps> or call the Office of Evangelization at 913-721-1570

**PROJECT CHRYSALIS** is a ministry offering hope through Sacred Scripture and community to parents or grandparents who have lost a child or grandchild. While this ministry is not a bereavement group, our mission is to offer support and hope through scripture in a time of transformation. Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday **October 27<sup>th</sup>** from 7:00-8:15p.m. - both in person and online via Zoom. Our guest will be Jerry Anselmo who lost his son Brian and began the BMA Foundation. We will meet in the St. Mark room in the lower level of Church of the Ascension, 9510 W. 127<sup>th</sup> St. in Overland Park. For more information and the Zoom invitation link, contact Deacon Ken Billinger at 913-634-4210 or email [kbillinger@archkck.org](mailto:kbillinger@archkck.org). The group is open to parents who have lost a child or grandparents who have lost a grandchild.

**BEGINNING EXPERIENCE** ~ Grief Support Weekend Beginning Experience is offering a healing weekend **November 6-8, 2020**, at Savior Pastoral Center in Kansas City, Kansas. This invitation is open to men and women of all ages who have suffered the loss of a spouse through death, divorce, or separation. It is a time to heal and a time to begin anew. Reservations are required. For more information visit: [www.beginningexperiencekc.org](http://www.beginningexperiencekc.org) email: [register.bekc@gmail.com](mailto:register.bekc@gmail.com) or contact Laura 308-530-1873

 **RESOURCES** 

**PRAYER FROM POPE FRANCIS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick. At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need. We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us. He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

**“THE HISTORY & LEGACY OF IMMACULATA HIGH SCHOOL”** is now available for purchase from the publisher, Lulu.com. Access the link to order from Facebook pages “Forever Raiders”, “Immaculata High School Alumni” or “The History & Legacy of Immaculata High School”. Direct link is: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/mary-ann-sachse-brown-and-marti-sachse-judson/the-history-legacy-of-immaculata-catholic-high-school-in-the-first-city-of-kansas/hardcover/product-24157407.html>. This is a keepsake hardcover 120 page book with nearly 300 images. Available in color (best quality) or black and white.

**NEW FOSTER CARE WEBSITE:** You can make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children in Kansas! Sadly, every day in Kansas, children are removed from their homes by no fault of their own for a variety of reasons. Each of these children is a precious, unique gift from God who deserves a loving and safe environment where he or she can THRIVE! Because care of the orphan and works of mercy are part of the mission for all baptized Catholics, the Church is the solution to an overwhelmed Kansas foster system which is facing increased needs due to COVID-19.

Please visit the new Archdiocesan Foster Care Ministry Website at [www.archkcks.com/foster](http://www.archkcks.com/foster) to learn how you can help vulnerable children in our community and support the families who have answered the call to love and protect these children. If you are currently fostering or have adopted your child/ren from foster care, we want to connect with you to support you on your journey! Please join the Archdiocesan Foster Family by registering here: [www.archkck.org/fostercaredatabase](http://www.archkck.org/fostercaredatabase)

**NEW END-OF-LIFE RESOURCE GUIDE IS NOW AVAILABLE**

The Ethics Council that serves Archbishop Naumann has produced a comprehensive resource for end-of-life planning titled “Catholic Guide For-End-Of Life and Establishing of Advance Directives”. The purpose of the guide is to assist the faithful in making wise decisions about complex treatments in grave illness or as life's end approaches in accordance with the teachings of our Catholic faith. It also includes two Appendices for a Durable Power of Attorney and an Advance Directive form. For a free digital copy of the Guide, visit [www.archkck.org/prolife-end-of-life-care](http://www.archkck.org/prolife-end-of-life-care).

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM - ADULT TRAINING (VIRTUS)** Effective Immediately In light of the current health conditions, one prudent and preventative measure we are taking is to make the VIRTUS Protecting God's Children for Adults training available Online as an option. Effective immediately, due to COVID-19, the Archdiocesan requirement for attending a VIRTUS Protecting God's Children for Adults workshop live session will be suspended and the option of the online version of the module can be offered in lieu of live training. This is a temporary safety precaution, and parishes may still offer the live training session available as an option if they prefer as long as the local county and state ordinances in effect at the time of the event are followed. Please note, the training must still be completed prior to participants working around youth, but the requirement may now temporarily be met by completing the online

Protecting God's Children module. Individuals needing to attend a session will be offered the option of the online module at the time of registration. They will still need to follow the background screening and policy completion process at the time of registration. Individuals who are already currently registered for an upcoming live session, may log back into their account and change to the online module. These procedures will be reviewed and updated periodically as needed and are in place to protect you, those you work with, and your family. Please stay safe and healthy and continue to pray for all our brothers and sisters in Christ! We are praying for all of you and your families. If you have questions, please contact Sandy Vielhauer at [svielhauer@archkck.org](mailto:svielhauer@archkck.org) or Jenifer Valenti at [jvalenti@archkck.org](mailto:jvalenti@archkck.org). May God bless you and keep you safe.

**PLANNED GIVING BRIEF:** Our Catholic Church has spanned the centuries and the globe and through all previous pandemics and disasters has been a source of charity to all through its parish priests and religious. We invite you to make a grateful response to God for these gifts by planning a deferred gift to your parish. Visit [CatholicPlannedGiving.org](http://CatholicPlannedGiving.org) to learn how to accept this invitation.



## **Election Novena Prayer Intentions** Monday, October 26 through Wednesday, November 4

Each day's intention is followed by one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be.

**Day One: Monday, October 26**

As we prepare for the national & local elections, in the midst of a global pandemic, may our political engagement be guided by our Catholic faith.

**Day Two: Tuesday, October 27**

In this month of the Holy Rosary, may Our Blessed Mother guide us in confronting racial inequalities and restoring peace in our communities.

**Day Three: Wednesday, October 28**

May all Americans recall the necessity of dialogue, civility, and humility in this election season.

**Day Four: Thursday, October 29**

May all people understand the moral and ethical dimensions of political decisions and decide accordingly.

**Day Five: Friday, October 30**

May voters & elected leaders uphold the dignity of every human life in their political engagement.

**Day Six: Saturday, October 31**

May Catholics recall all aspects of Catholic social teaching as they consider their votes.

**Day Seven: Sunday, November 1**

May there be a transformation of politics to focus on the dignity of the human person and the common good.

**Day Eight: Monday, November 2**

May we keep in mind the gift of religious freedom and our duty to defend and exercise it as faithful citizens.

**Day Nine: Tuesday, November 3**

Today, as we approach the polls, may we understand & embrace the principles of our faith that guide our political engagement.

**Closing: Wednesday, November 4**

May the leaders elected this week be guided by the Holy Spirit as they fulfill their positions.



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## Catholics For Family Peace

Education and Research on Domestic Abuse  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE FAMILY

**Are you concerned about a family member or friend experiencing abuse?**

*“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”*

– Matthew 11:28

Once you recognize the abuse, know you are not to blame and you are not alone. No one deserves to be abused.

This is not just the law in America.

This is the teaching of the Catholic Church.

**Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline:**

**800-799-SAFE (7233) - 24 hours, toll free [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)**

#### How do I know if I am being abused?

In your relationship, you may be experiencing:

- constant insults and belittling
- threats against you or your children
- intimidation and harassment
- jealousy and possessiveness
- pushing, shoving or holding down
- punching, slapping, kicking or choking
- forced or unwanted sex or sexual acts

#### How do I know if I am abusing?

- If you are extremely jealous
- If you control your partner's activities
- If you use physical force to solve problems

From the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Committee:  
**When I Call for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence against Women:**

“We acknowledge that violence has many forms, many causes, and many victims—men as well as women. The Catholic Church teaches that violence against another person in any form fails to treat that person as someone worthy of love. Instead, it treats the person as an object to be used.”

Learn more about how the Church cares at [www.CatholicsForFamilyPeace.org](http://www.CatholicsForFamilyPeace.org)

*Catholics For Family Peace Education and Research is an Initiative of the National Institute for the Family working toward a coordinated Catholic response to domestic abuse.*

**ADVICE & AID**  
PREGNANCY CENTERS

**Event 2020**



**ENVISION**

*The End of Abortion*

Thursday, Oct 15, 7:30-9:00

In-Home Livestream Event

REGISTER: [adviceandaid.com/event2020/](http://adviceandaid.com/event2020/)

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### RESPECT LIFE MONTH STATEMENT

Archbishop Naumann's full statement for Respect Life Month appeared in a [September 24 USCCB news release](#). It is also available in a variety of formats in both English and Spanish at [respectlife.org/respect-life-month](http://respectlife.org/respect-life-month).

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### PRIORITIES AT THE POLLS

This article can be used to help educate Catholics about our obligation to help protect human life through civic engagement. Include it in your parish bulletin, share it on social media and your website, or include it in email newsletters. Available in multiple formats at [www.respectlife.org/priorities-at-the-polls](http://www.respectlife.org/priorities-at-the-polls).

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### CELEBRATE ON SOCIAL

Use our Facebook ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)) and Twitter ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)) covers to celebrate Respect Life Month. Invite followers to participate by including an explanatory caption with the Facebook cover. Sample text: *Celebrate Respect Life Month at [www.respectlife.org/celebrate](http://www.respectlife.org/celebrate)!*

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### BISHOP SPEAKS OUT ON ABORTION AND THE ELECTION

Bishop Edward Malesic of Cleveland wrote an [op-ed](#) urging Christians to vote to oppose the "intrinsic evil of abortion." Read more [here](#).

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### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

October is also recognized as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This year, the sad reality of [domestic violence](#) is particularly evident due to the pandemic. Check out the resources in [this digital toolkit](#) and a [webinar on Promoting Peaceful Relationships at Home](#) on Wednesday, October 14 hosted by the USCCB Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth and Catholics for Family Peace.

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### LIVE THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

This short reflection unpacks the 2020-2021 Respect Life Program theme. It is available in multiple formats at the bottom of each page ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)). Share it in newsletters, bulletins, and social media, or use it to begin a parish pro-life ministry meeting with a time of reflection and discussion.

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### LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER

The Catholic faithful remember in prayer, especially during November, those who have gone before us. It is also a fitting time to consider how we can support loved ones who are approaching the end of their lives. "Caring for Loved Ones at Life's End" and a variety of supplemental materials [can be found here](#).

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## OCTOBER 7: NATIONAL VIRTUAL ROSARY

October 7 is the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary. Archbishop Gomez, President of the USCCB, will host a virtual Rosary event. All are invited to participate at 3:00 PM Eastern. [Learn More Here.](#)

[Visit our Website](#)

28<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A (9/11/2020)

Texts:

First Reading. Isaiah 25:6-10

Second Reading. Philippians 4:12-14,19-20

Third Reading. Matthew 22:1-14

Theme: "I have my banquet all prepared...Come"

Congregation: St. Joseph of the Valley-St. Lawrence Parish, Easton/ Kansas.

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning again and welcome to worship. Today's reading invites us to reflect on our response to The Lord's invitation to his great banquet thrown to us every Sunday in the celebration of the Eucharistic banquet. "I have my banquet all prepared...Come"

1 Daily life:

Gregory and Margaret had been very busy the whole week. They were making all kinds of preparations for the wedding, next Saturday, of their eldest daughter. Food and drinks would be there in plenty for all the guests, and the guests invited were many. They both wanted this to be a big feast and they were making sure to invite all their friends and neighbors.

Saturday came, and the time for the feast also came, but nearly nobody appeared. Gregory and Margaret looked at each other. What was wrong? Had not the invitations reached the people? Gregory's elder brother and Margaret's brother were sent to remind those invited that the feast is ready. They soon came back alone. No guests had joined them. Gregory became angry:

- What's happening? Are Daniel and his wife not coming?
- They have travelled.
- And what about Jeremiah and Celina, are they gone too?
- They said they were too busy weeding their field.
- But surely Peter and Ruth are following you?
- I was told they have bought a new car and they have gone to fetch it.

Margaret was so sad, she started crying. Gregory, on his part, was very angry. He shouted:

- If those people don't want to join the feast, others will be happy to do so. Go and bring back all those you'll meet on the way and let's start to celebrate.

2 God's Message:

What Gregory and Margaret have experienced is very much like what we have heard in today's gospel, is it not? God's word for us today is about guests being invited and not

responding to the invitation. It is Jesus Himself who has told us this story of the banquet and it is good for us to try to find out what he wanted us to understand when he spoke those words.

We can understand that Jesus meant more than the invitation to a wedding. For God sends out different kinds of invitations to us. You may wonder: "What kind of invitation does God send to us?"

The greatest invitation God gives to us is the call to become His children. When we were born on this earth, God has given us life. But he wants us also a share in his own life, making us His children. This he does through Baptism. Many of us have already answered this first invitation from God. Some of you here are also preparing to answer this invitation, as you prepare for baptism.

God also invites us to grow in friendship with Him. How are we to do this? One way is by speaking with Him every day through prayer. We all know that for friendship to remain strong between ourselves and our friends, we need to talk to them. If we do not, slowly our friendship becomes weak and dies. So, it is with God.

God wants His life in us and his friendship with us to become stronger and stronger. This is why, through Jesus, He invites us to eat the food He has especially prepared for us. This food is His body and blood in the Eucharist.

Jesus speaks to us other words of invitation. He says: "Learn from me". Jesus wants us to follow His example. He wants us to take on His thoughts and His ways, so we may become more like Him.

Jesus invites us to trust God our Father for all our needs. He tells us: "Look at the birds in the air, look at the flowers in the fields". Jesus assures us that if God take care of those, He cannot fail to care much more for us.

All those invitations are invitations from God to us. And every day, he sends us smaller ones too. A person in need comes to ask for my help...A stranger comes my way asking for information...A sick friend ask me to go with to the hospital...A neighbor who mourns the death of a child needs my comfort...An old man or woman asks for assistance...All these, and many others are invitations from God to me. Invitations that call for my response and ask me to do something.

What kind of a response do I give to God? Do I answer His invitation or I am like the people in Jesus' story? Am I too busy with other things, too concerned with my own occupations, to bother about God's message?

Is this not what happens to me sometimes. God invites me but ...I am not interested just now...Later, perhaps...Just now my thoughts are somewhere else, my efforts are given to other things.



Yes, God's invitation remains. The prophet Isaiah has described the feast God prepared for us in words that we can all understand. He speaks of:

"A banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wine"

It is a feast where there will be no sadness or mourning. "The Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek". And "He will destroy Death forever. These words explain that the feast God has prepared for us is not a celebration of a few days only. It will be an eternal celebration, a feast that will last ever. The feast of heaven.

The invitation to heaven! Is there anyone among us who want to miss it? Of course, not! How can we make sure not to that wonderful invitation? The answer is: by answering, day by day, the different invitations God addresses us.

### 3 New Life:

The best time to start is now. In a short while, we will be invited to share the Body and Blood of Jesus. Will you answer his invitation? If you cannot, is there not something that you could do so that, next Sunday, you will be able to answer?

And every morning, as you get up, and every night, as you go to bed, God is waiting for you to greet Him. He invites you to turn to Him in prayer every day. It is His invitation. Will He get a response from you?

Fr. Francis Bakyor.