

10/15/17 28 A

-- Many golfers may remember the backlash after the 2014 US Ryder Cup team lost under their captain Tom Watson. But he was also captain in 1993, the last time the US team won the cup in Europe.

-- When that victorious team came home, they were invited to the White House by President Clinton (who'd been elected less than a year before). It was obvious that few, if any members of the team, had voted for him, and some were openly opposed to accepting the invitation.

-- Watson had not voted for him either, but he put his foot down. They were to accept the invitation, because this wasn't about politics. This was an invitation from the President, and they would respect that.

-- Judging from more recent events with our previous and present President, I'm not sure that would happen the same way. Fewer people *seem to respect an office unless they agree with person who holds the office*. Perhaps, though, that's not a new trait of human nature.

-- Otherwise, why would Jesus have told this parable? In Matthew's version, it's not just an important person, but the king, who throws this wedding banquet. But too many people dishonor him by making flimsy excuses or even by being openly hostile.

-- God promises a heavenly banquet of great food for his people in honor of his Son. And, unlike the typical guest list for a royal wedding, his guests include ordinary people. They don't have to be rich movers and shakers or even top-notch golfers. God is pretty indiscriminate in his invitation.

-- Even so, many people don't think it's worth their time to accept it. How many people offer flimsy excuses when they're invited to this Holy banquet of the Mass? Kids' sports, weekend activities or simply more sleep are a higher priority.

-- Some are even hostile, in the sense that they think it's "boring." They look for entertainment value, and it seems to fall short. But they don't make an effort to participate or find meaning in it.

-- Now, at this point, you could be thinking *I'm here. I've made the effort to show up.* And that's true. But here's where the second half of the story comes into play.

-- It may seem illogical or even downright insensitive on the part of the host to be mad at the man without the wedding garment. After all, the invitees were pulled off the street.

-- What we forget, though, is that God provides us with what we need. It's as if we've come to a fancy restaurant which requires men to wear a coat, but they are willing to provide a coat for someone who doesn't have one. And it's a good coat, not a tacky one.

-- This man shunned the host. We can do that when we show up for worship but refuse to be transformed by it. We do that when we just go through the motions as if nothing is different because of our experience here.

-- In the words of one good preacher, the Lord invites us to come as we are. But he does not want us to remain as we are. What we do here should transform our lives in some way. It should help us to reflect the love of Christ more fully to those around us.

-- Our Lord and king has issued us the invitation to his banquet. The food is simple—bread and wine—but it nourishes us more fully than the finest foods in the world could possibly nourish us.

-- Do we respect the invitation of our Lord and master? Do we want to be transformed by hearing his word and partaking of his body and blood? Will we go away from here transformed, even if just a little bit, because of our participation in this banquet?

-- The Lord gives us what we need to partake of his everlasting life. He now awaits our loving and joyful response.