

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Missionary Activity of the Church

“Go therefore to the cross roads, and invite to the marriage feast whomever you shall find” (Matt., 22:9)

The banquet described in today’s Gospel is the Church which Jesus Christ established for the salvation of all men; and the king, anxious to have his banquet filled with guests, is Almighty God who from all eternity planned to have His Divine Son honoured through the affiliation of all human beings in this Church. Down through the nineteen centuries since its foundation the Catholic Church has been urgently inviting men and women to come to the banquet, to feast their souls on the divine truth which she offers to her members, and especially to partake of the divine food furnished by Our Lord Himself, the Holy Eucharist.

Despite this urgent invitation of the Church, many refuse to enter. It is not for us to judge of their subjective attitude; only God can read their consciences, and we know that people can be outside the Church and yet remain in good faith. However, the Church will continue until the end of time to preach Christ’s doctrine inviting all to seek in the Catholic religion the truth and spiritual strength which come from Christ Himself.

Like the servants of the king in the Gospel, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church proclaim the Church’s teaching and her claim to the loyalty and obedience of all men. This doctrine the Church is endeavouring to preach in all parts of the world. Hence, on the third Sunday of October every year we observe Mission Sunday to remind Catholics of the missionary activities of the Church, both in our own land and in foreign countries, and to urge the faithful to coöperate in this missionary activity by their prayers and their financial support.

The members of the Church should realise that the work of spreading the faith is not the exclusive task of bishops and priests. Thousands of religious, both brothers and sisters, are engaged in this work of zeal. To these groups of consecrated workers the Church is constantly inviting those who believe that they may have received from God a vocation to the priesthood or to the religious state. Furthermore, the laity in their daily lives can help toward bringing the knowledge and the love of the true faith to souls that are seeking light. Often a lay person can assist a non-Catholic in finding the way to the Church more effectively than a priest.

Practical Application

Today be sure to say a fervent prayer for the progress of Catholic missionary activity, and resolve to do something in the way of financial aid, even though it is only a small contribution. Moreover, if you have non-Catholic friends desirous to know more about the Catholic Church, make arrangements for them to obtain correct information about the Catholic faith.