

Christ, with His incarnation, adopted our nature, in order to make it more beautiful than before and to give it also the appropriate “wedding garment”, so that it could respond to the chief invitation. It depends on us, if we will enjoy such a marriage and if we will enjoy such a rich table. But also on us – and not, of course, on some “honorary disposition” of the Guestmaster –does it depend, if we will be cast out into the “outer darkness”, “where the crying and the gnashing of teeth is”. It is us who will not be able to stand at the wedding table, in the undesirable case that we will not have a wedding garment.

So for this reason, let us often repeat the awakening hymn: “I see your bridal chamber, my Savior, adorned. And I do not have a garment in order to enter into it. Brighten the garment of my soul, oh Giver of light, and save me”.

Archim. B.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2018 14TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**, *Mamas the Martyr, John the Abstainer, Patriarch of Constantinople, Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople, Ammon & Aeithalas the Martyrs of Thrace, Cosmas the Hermit*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Plagal of the First Tone*

**EOTHINON :** *Third Orthros Gospel*

**EPISTLE READING:** *II Corinthians 1:21-24; 2:1-4*

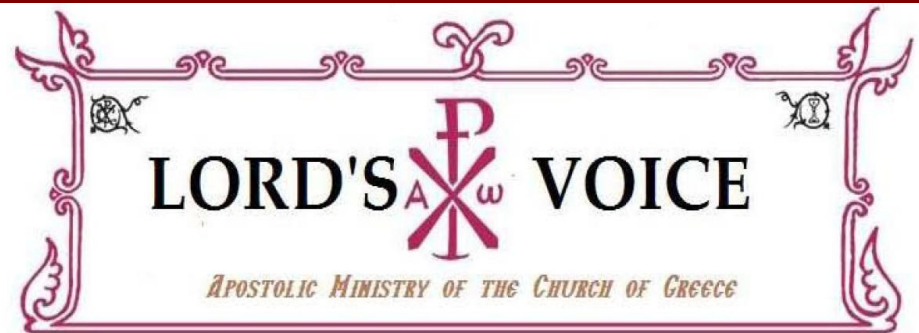
**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 22:2-14*

**NEXT SEPTEMBER 9, 2018 SUNDAY BEFORE HOLY**

**CROSS**, *The Holy & Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, Severian the Martyr of Sebastia, Theophanes the Confessor.*

**EPISTLE READING:** *Galatians 6:11-18*

**GOSPEL READING:** *John 3:13 - 17*



**66<sup>TH</sup> YEAR SEPTEMBER 2, 2018 PAMPHLET #35 (3405)**

## INVITATION TO A WEDDING

Is there, I wonder, a greater honor for someone, than to be invited to a royal wedding? Is there a greater cause for joy? The refusal of those invited, to participate in the feast, seems very odd, which today's parable mentions. Justifiably also, the sacred Chrysostom wonders and asks each one who avoids going: «to what are they inviting you? To pains and toils and sweats? No, but to delight and a banquet. Is there a greater ingratitude than to refuse such an invitation to a wedding, and furthermore a royal wedding?» And the worst thing is that some people did not go, not because they were occupied with farm jobs and business activities, «but having neglected, they scorned the invitation». They didn't have absolutely any justification.

### Who is the bride?

Even more tragic, is that many of those invited did not settle for a simple refusal. When the servants of the king went to tell them that the wedding table is spread and is awaiting them, instead of them thanking them for the reminder, some dared, on the one hand, to curse, and others, to kill. And here, not only does the Golden-tongued one wonder and get frustrated, comparing

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 22:2-14

The Lord said this parable, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.' But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

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the behavior of those invited to the wedding, with the behavior of those evil farmers of the vineyard. They at least, he says, came «demanding incomes and fruits and slaughtered. These, however, inviting them to the wedding, are murdered! What is more insane than this?» Investigating the causes of such an unacceptable down to criminal behavior, we seek in the wedding «invitation», the identity of the groom and the bride. With the "eyes" of the Apostle Paul "we read" that the Groom is Christ and

the Bride is His Church (Ephesians 5: 32). Consequently, in the end, the invitation concerns our own wedding with Christ. So instead of us considering the immeasurable height of this honor, and instead of us honorably "spending ourselves" in order to make, as bright as possible, a preparation, we allow indolence and our stinginess to drag us down to an unacceptable refusal, or even worse, to a most audacious attacking behavior, as if He who is inviting us is to blame. And the truth is that we had the presuppositions and the "estate" to make a brighter preparation. Truly, God had formed us not only with the beauty "of the bride", but He had adorned us with a huge wealth of gifts, with which we could adorn, even more so, our beauty. We however, altered this beauty into the ugliness of a prostitute.

### **The Bridegroom adorns the lack of beauty of the bride"**

Here's why the "invitation" of this wedding of ours became so undesirable. It reminds us how much we allowed the first created beauty of ours to become useless. It forces us to see our wretched state. Despite all these things, our "Bridegroom" did not allow us to despair. In order to give us the capability of refinding our ancient beauty, He did something that – together with Chrysostom – leaves us speechless: "God desired a prostitute"! Says Saint John. "And what does He do?" He comes also and as a woman He is joined to her". And as if He does not believe Himself, His own eyes, he continues: "He came to marry a prostitute, thus as she was, filthy - look, in order to understand the eros of the Bridegroom. Because eros, many times, makes you marry even an ugly woman. Thus also Christ, fell in love with our nature, which from sin had become unrecognizable, and He married it, in order to regive it, its beauty". And the sacred Chrysostom concludes: "O Bridegroom, adorning the bride's lack of beauty!"