

*Monday, 4 November - Memory of Saint Charles Borromeo*

*Luke 14: 12-14*

### **Homily**

The whole of chapter 14 of Luke is made up of what we might call Jesus' "table talks". Even though Luke is the only one of the Evangelists to report them, these 'table talks' belonged to a popular literary genre commonly used at the time.

Jesus was invited to a banquet and, like all the other guests, he spoke when it was his turn to offer some reflections and teaching.

Part of his teaching concerns the choice of seats; and this teaching is addressed to all the guests present; then comes a teaching on the choice of guests and is addressed to his host. This second teaching is the one we have read. When we read this text, we should think of ourselves both as the host and as his guests.

The people we want to invite to our table, or whom we want to help and serve, must not just be the interesting and pleasant people, with whom it is good to be, or those who can help us in difficult times, for example by making it easier for us to get a job or a good contract, or by saving us from paying a parking fine, or by getting us an appointment with a specialist quickly... No! We must first help and serve those who are most in need, the poor, the wounded - all kinds of wounds - the blind, etc. These are the people who will welcome us into the Kingdom of heaven.

Saint Benedict, who in the sixth century wrote a Rule of Life for monks - a Rule that remains the foundation of monastic life in the West to this day - understood this Gospel very well. In the chapter on hospitality, he recommends receiving the poor and needy, as well as the rich and powerful, like Christ Himself, without distinction of person.

Let us ask God for this wisdom, which may seem foolish to men, but which is the very wisdom of God.

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Today we commemorate Saint Charles Borromeo, who was created

Cardinal and Secretary of State by his uncle, Pope Pius IV, at the age of 22, before becoming Bishop of Milan. He worked hard to implement the decisions of the Council of Trent to reform the Church, convening

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numerous synods and setting up seminaries to train future priests. This obviously brings to mind the image of one of his successors in Milan, Cardinal Montini, who later became Pope Paul VI, and who, after Vatican II, initiated the series of synods that still scan the life of the Church today.

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