

## 28A

*Most of us have seen the painting of Christ as the Light of the World with a lantern in his hand knocking on the door of a house, with the words: 'Behold I stand at the door and knock'. Interesting to note that the latch is on the inside. Yes, Jesus knocks on our door alright but it's up to us to open it. He doesn't force entry. He invites us to follow him but leaves the decision to us.*

The people invited to the wedding feast today turned down the invitation. The same happened to the rich young man in the gospel. Jesus invited him to leave his cushy life-style behind and follow Him but he turned down the offer and walked away a rather sad man. But Jesus didn't run after him and give him a dressing down. Even though God doesn't coerce us to follow him there is always a basic sadness in passing up His invitation.

Our response to follow Jesus, however, must not be half-hearted or complacent. That's like taking Heaven for granted. The man minus his wedding garment would fit into this category. Being a catholic Christian could turn out to be no more than a mere label we use without much depth to it.

Some Scripture scholars tell us that the wedding garment refers to ongoing repentance in our lives. Just like most people take a shower every day to feel refreshed, so too we should regularly clean the inner man woman by examining our conscience daily, and frequenting the Sacrament of Penance. It's said that Pope John Paul 11 never missed a week without confession. We've discarded the wedding garment when we play down the radical nature of God's call and end up being little different from nominal believers. Being a baptised catholic, for instance, doesn't give us an automatic passport into the heavenly banquet. A baptismal certificate may be needed for admittance to the catholic school but it's no guarantee of entry into Eternal

Life unless we take our faith seriously. I know the word 'radical' can have negative connotations but you can be a radical follower of Jesus in a very quiet unassuming sort of way or conversely be a mediocre follower in loud garish sort of way.

Someone remarked to me recently that hoards of people go to Holy Communion, and I'm not here to judge, but the number of people going to confession leaves a lot to be desired.

Confession seems to be the 'forgotten sacrament'. I would say that one of the true signs of spiritual renewal within any parish could be gauged by the number of people going to regular confession. The book of Proverbs tells us that the just man falls seven times a day. If that's true it adds up to a lot of repenting we need to do in the space of a week. Bearing this in mind how many of us, on inspection, would not be wearing our wedding garment of ongoing repentance? How many of us would use the lame excuse that we're only human.

The Gospel calls for a whole-hearted response with no hint of complacency. In this way, proudly wearing our wedding garment of ongoing renewal, we won't feel out of place at the heavenly banquet.