

In today's Gospel, Luke 14:16-24, we hear another parable of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. A man gave a great banquet and invited many, but some of the people that he invited gave excuses of why they couldn't attend. So, the man sent his servant to go out into the streets and bring in the poor, maimed, blind and lame to the banquet. When the servant had done this, he reported that there was still room. Then the master told the servant to go out to the highways and hedges, to compel all the people to come to the banquet so that his house would be filled. He then said, "For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen."

What do we do when we have our birthday? Do we not invite people to our home or out at a venue to celebrate? Do they not bring us presents in honor of this event? The Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is upon us. It is the birthday of Him who through great love became incarnate in the world to grant us great mercy, that of eternal life, that of salvation. It is the day, as Saint Athanasius proclaimed, to which God became man so that we may become gods.

Dearest ones, what is our present to Him, *Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man*? Let us bring the gift of ourselves with an open heart in every aspect of our lives, including being present on the day of His nativity where we are all invited to attend a great banquet at the Divine Liturgy. Let us prepare the cave of our hearts to receive Him in the Highest so that we may proclaim joyfully, "Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!"