

Donnybrook

1 December 2021

Welcome

A parishioner kindly observed that in the prayer just before communion, I adjust the translation. In the Missal, it says: "Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb", whereas the version I use runs: "Happy are we, called to the wedding banquet of the Lamb."

Topic

Why tinker with the translation?

Steps

Well, a couple of reasons. Firstly, years ago, Nivard Kinsella objected to the use of the word supper. In Ireland, he observed, it has come to mean a light snack before going to bed, a digestive biscuit and a warm drink, perhaps even the dreaded Cocoa!!

Secondly, the reference is to the book of Revelation, which closes with a wonderful wedding feast, with music and lavish hospitality. None of this is conveyed in the rather bland "supper of the Lamb."

Thirdly, as we see from today's readings, meals are symbolic of the hospitality of God. The image in Isaiah 25 is quite wonderful:

A banquet of rich foods, a banquet of fine wines,
Of food, rich and juicy, of fine strained wines.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus practiced open table-fellowship. He broke the rules, to give people a concrete experience of the love and compassion of God to all. The gospel today is some kind of upgrade, an enactment or as we might say today a pre-enactment of the Messianic Banquet – again God's hospitality to all when time is over.

Conclusion

For all these reasons, supper seems to me a rather weak translation – there is so much more to it when we gather around the table of the Lord.