

Invited and by an Awesome God

In our reading from Isaiah we hear of a generous God offering people a delicious banquet.

Here in the 21st century we might not be easily impressed with such a banquet.

Our modern response might well be:

“Ho-hum. I just had a great dinner at my niece’s wedding.

So, what’s the big deal?”

Or, “that sounds just like our annual family Thanksgiving meal”.

Or, my grandkids might well say “That sounds like that great breakfast buffet we have at the Big Boys on Sunday.”

Well, back at the time of Isaiah it was a big deal.

They were in a country that was not blessed with the great fertile lands we have here in America.

Even so, we may not be that impressed with a God who provides a great feast.

OK then, if the grand banquet does not *excite* us about God’s generosity, let’s look for some other ways that God can impress us with power and generosity.

I am an engineer by background and by inclination.

Things that can really impress me about God often involve scientific marvels.

A few days ago the Nobel prize for astronomy was awarded to three men:

Saul Perlmutter – US

Adam Riess – US

Brian Schmidt – Australia.

According to the National Geographic website, these three men contributed to the discovery that the universe is not only expanding but also speeding

up.

Their discovery goes back about 10 years.

However, 10 years later they are still trying to explain why.

The more we discover the more we find out we do NOT know!

As finite mortals we recognize that there are things beyond our comprehension.

For example, let's think about our amazing universe.

As we look out into the night sky we can see so many stars, the stars that are here in our own galaxy, the Milky Way.

My younger grandkids would say a "gazillion" stars!

Astronomers, however, like to use real numbers.

They estimate that here in our galaxy there are 200,000,000,000 to 400,000,000,000 stars ... (200 to 400 billion stars)!

But our Milky Way is not the only galaxy.

There are some galaxies as small as 10,000,000 stars.

Some galaxies are as large as 100, 000,000,000,000 stars (one hundred thousand billion).

AND, astronomers estimate that there are more than 170,000,000,000 (170 billion) galaxies in the "observable universe."

So many galaxies with so many stars in each!

That means that we have about

170,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars in the universe!!!

[put the number on cards in front of the altar.]

That's 22 zeroes. WOW!

Each one of those stars is a sun so who knows how many planets are out there.

And who made them – the galaxies, the stars, the planets?

We recite each week:

**"We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth."**

What an awesome god!
A God who created all that!
The same God who created the environment here on earth for plant life, for animal life, for human life.
That's how we got here.
Thank you, Lord, for life!

Isaiah was trying to make that very point to the Israelites – our God is an awesome God.

Isaiah tells us that this awesome God is also the God who saves us.

In another place Isaiah puts these ideas in such poetic terms:

[Is 40:12-14] (see Morning Prayer, Thursday, Week III)

“Who has cupped in his hand the waters of the sea,
And marked off the heavens with a span?
Who has directed the spirit of the Lord,
Or has instructed God as a counselor?
Whom did God consult to gain knowledge?
Who taught God the path of judgment,
Or showed God the way of understanding?”

All of these great things we know about God call for, invoke, beg for a response of praise and blessing.

We have a beautiful example of such a response in the Bible.

Daniel and three other young men were thrown into the lion's den and there they pray out to God.

They pray:

“Sun and moon, bless the Lord; mountains and hills, bless the Lord.”

But how do the sun and moon, mountains and hills bless the Lord?

They do it by their very nature.

They don't have minds or mouths to shout it out.

They do it quietly and passively – but so dramatically.

But what about us?

Yes, we are made in the image and likeness of God.

So, just walking down the street we parade God's marvels to the rest of the world.

But, there is a little more.

We are not *just* like the passive sun and stars, mountains or hills.

We have a life – we *can* think and talk.

Even more importantly, we can *choose* to acknowledge God ... or not.

We can *choose* to praise God ... or not.

We can *choose* to thank God ... or not.

We can also *choose* when and how and where to praise God.

Actually, we can *choose*:

To deny God exists

To ignore God

To believe in God

To bring God into our lives with gusto!

Regardless of our choices, God's generous invitation is there.

And as Jesus points out in today's Gospel – please RSVP!

Please respond to God's invitation!

Why do we tell and retell these Bible stories, the stories from the prophets and from the Gospel writers?

They are all simply reminders that this infinite, loving God is inviting us, calling us:

To be with God, now and forever

To be mindful of God each and every day

To accept God's invitation to know the most powerful being in
Detroit,

in Michigan,

in the US,

in the world,

in the solar system,

in the galaxy,

in the universe – or universes???

Yes!

Our God is an awesome God.

Our God is a generous God.

Our God is an inviting God.

God is inviting us every moment of every day.

Don't forget to RSVP to God's invitation.

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