

FR ALAN'S REFLECTION

PUTTING ON CHRIST

In the Rite of Baptism of Baptism for Children we have a prayer known as the Clothing with the White Garment. A garment is placed on the child accompanied by the following prayer: 'N. you have become a new creation and have clothed yourself in Christ. See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven.'

Here at St Joseph's Malvern we place a white stole on the child during our baptism ceremonies. It is always interesting to observe how the child reacts. Some just accept it. Others take hold of it and immediately throw it off. Both reactions are noteworthy in the light of this Sunday's Gospel.

Today in our Gospel we hear about the man who was thrown out because he was not wearing a wedding garment. Perhaps we may wonder, why was the host so upset over this man's clothes? If he were a traveller how could he be expected to have a fine wedding garment? However, this parable is not about wearing clothes. It is about wearing Jesus Christ. The man who came without the proper clothes is the one who was Christian in name only. He was happy to accept the Lord's invitation but refused to exercise his responsibility in the Christian community. They refused to put on Christ throughout their lives. Unlike an infant at a baptism ceremony who does not know any better, the decision to throw the garment away was a conscious one.

Do we put on Christ in our lives? Are we prepared to put on Christ in our homes, our workplaces and in the social settings we find ourselves? Do we live out our baptismal call by showing good example to others? Or are we sometimes guilty of taking off Christ out of fear of being unpopular or being too preoccupied with other things? Are we happy to put on Christ when something good is going in our Christian community but then just as quickly take off Christ the moment we discover that being part of a Christian community is going to make demands of us?

The call to put on Christ in our lives means that we always need to be prepared to give evidence to our Christian beliefs so that all may see the outward signs of our Christian dignity.