

Dear Friends,

This past Saturday I went to Loras College in Dubuque. It was homecoming weekend there, and it was the silver anniversary of my graduation. I left early in the morning, and spent the day visiting classmates and old friends I have not seen in many years. The football game was fantastic. We beat Cornell College (from Mount Vernon, Iowa, not the more famous one) 42-0. During the game I visited with the President of Loras College, Jim Collins, who was a year behind me, and is a personal friend of mine. He asked me if I was going to the Reunion Dinner which was held in the ballroom after Mass. Of course, I was delighted to say "yes" even though I had not pre-registered for this particular event.

When I got to the dinner, I found the tables for the class of 1983, and started visiting with other classmates I had not seen earlier in the day. It was great to reconnect with them. It became clear to me, even before I walked into the banquet hall, however, that I was not dressed as formally as most of the others. I wore dress khakis, and a neatly pressed shirt, but all the other clergymen wore their black suits, and almost everyone else had on much more formal attire. I was not properly dressed for the occasion.

No one seemed to mind but me. It was a last minute decision. Some of my other classmates went to Walnut Tap, an old favorite from years gone by, and I knew that wasn't the place for me. Still, I felt out of place with what I had on. So, I smiled, looked intently at those I conversed with, heard their stories, shared some of mine, and it was still a delightful evening. But I was not properly dressed. It still bugs me.

Proper attire matters. What we wear indicates the level of care we have for our appearance at important events. Our celebration of the Eucharist is one of the most important things we do in our lives each week. What we put on matters because our celebration is a sacred act. We come before God, who enters into our lives with sacramental grace. He frees us

from our sins. Our souls are nourished with the Body and Blood of Christ. When we are at Mass we are partaking in our earthly share of the heavenly banquet.

The attitudes we put on are, however, even more important than the clothing we wear at Mass. Are we ready to receive God's grace? Are we prepared to receive God's mercy and to share it with others? Do we come to Mass hungry to receive the Body of Christ? Are we grateful for what we receive? Are we willing to give what we receive away to others in our daily lives? Does the banquet matter to us?

Like the reunion dinner I attended Saturday night, the way we dress says something important about how much we care. The attitudes we wear also matter. It is always good for us to take into serious consideration how prepared we are to celebrate the banquet God has invited us to attend.

In joyful hope,  
Fr. Tim Seigel