



Boston Catholic Journal

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What Does it Take?

Jesus said to the crowds: "To what shall I compare this generation? It is like children who sit in marketplaces and call to one another, 'We played the flute for you, but you did not dance, we sang a dirge but you did not mourn.'" (St. Matthew 11.16-17)

AS our Creator He commanded us, but we did not obey.

As our Suitor He wooed us, but we fled.

As a jealous Lover he rose up when we ran off to the arms of false lovers.

Through the desert He pursued us for forty years.

In the oases he sung to us and we resolutely spurned Him, turning aside to other lovers.

Through his prophets He pleaded, remonstrated, coaxed, even threatened us ... to no avail.

In our fecklessness He exiled us ... only to call us back.

We hung our harps over the banks of foreign rivers, and mingled our tears with their waters ...
He relented.

We then slew His prophets and went our way.

He then chastised us and when we cried He healed us.

Finally He sent His Only Begotten Son.

We crucified Him.

His Son sent His Apostles.

We crucified them, too.

He makes Saints of the sons and daughters of men ... our children ... and still we turn aside.

Promises of Heaven.

Threats of Hell.

We are deaf to them equally.

What does it take?

Is it little wonder that so many make light of Hell ...take Heaven for granted?

It is called the "*sin of presumption*" – our *presuming* upon God's forgiveness, our *presuming* His mercy, His love, His goodness. We attempt to bind God's freedom through our license. In the end, in a terrible sense of entitlement, we are even blind to Christ on the Cross, presuming — as though we ourselves had purchased — our own salvation.

After all, He "*has to*" do it if He's really God. Right? ("*If you are really the Christ, come down from that Cross!*")

As though we would behave any differently if we were *forced* into Paradise ... and as though Paradise would be Heaven populated by people exactly like us. People doing as we would have them do ... much as we would have God do what we would have Him do.

Parents call such children "brats". The Church calls such children "obdurate".

God calls them ... and they simply do not come.

You *can* coerce them to the Banquet Table ... but you *cannot* force them to eat the Bread of Angels ...

What does it take?

All that has been done ...



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