

Religious Education:

Twenty-Eight Sunday of the Year

Week Beginning 11th October 2026 Year A

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22: 1-14

Gospel Reflection: The Wedding Party

Introduction:

God gives each one of us an invitation to join him in his heavenly kingdom and the celebration of everlasting life. We must choose whether to accept the invitation or turn away from his loving offer.

First Reading (Isaiah 25:6-10a): A prophecy of a rich banquet prepared by God on His mountain, where death and sorrow will be destroyed forever.

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 23:1-6): *"The Lord is my shepherd; there is no lack in what he gives." or "I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."*

Second Reading (Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20): St. Paul shares that he has learned to find strength and contentment in Christ through every circumstance of life.

Gospel (Matthew 22:1-14): A king invites people to his son's wedding banquet, the initial guests refuse or turn violent, and the king opens the invitation to everyone on the streets, both good and bad.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come. Next, he sent some more servants. "Tell those who have been invited" he said "that I have my banquet all prepared, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, everything is ready.

Come to the wedding." But they were not interested: one went off to his farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his servants, maltreated them and killed them. The king was furious. He dispatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone you can find to the wedding." So, these servants went out on to the roads and collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests."

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you invite each one of us to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Help us to make the effort to do things God's way, so that we can accept your offer and be ready to share in your glory at the end of time.

Gospel Reflection for the 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time:

All are invited, all are welcome. We all love a good meal with our friends and family. Whenever we share a meal with those we love, there is a sense of joy, community and belonging which is experienced by those around the table. Stories are told and new memories are created.

The same was true at the time of Jesus. We know from the gospels, that Jesus sat and ate with many people. To share a meal with another person then was a sign of equality. All those around the table were seen as equals as they often ate from the same plate or bowl. However, if you were sick in any way, you were not allowed to sit at the table with others, even members of your own family. To be sick was to be seen as a sinner who was being punished by God. The Pharisees, Scribes and the Jewish elders decided who could come into Temple, the synagogue and sit at the table to share a meal. If a person didn't reach the standard that they laid down, then they were ignored, dismissed and unable to eat with others.

Jesus is very well aware of this. He himself often ate with those who were ignored, hated and dismissed. We read in the gospel of Mark that the religious leaders pointed to Jesus and complained that he even eats with sinners. Nobody was excluded or dismissed by Jesus; all were invited, welcomed and included.

In the first reading and gospel this Sunday the image and symbol of the meal and banquet are used to let us know how generous God is. The first reading tells us that the Lord will prepare a meal of rich wine and food. The Lord will remove the veil of sadness and all people will be invited to this celebration. In the gospel, Jesus continues this message. The table is set and the food is ready. However, those invited gave various excuses because they could not go to the feast. In response, the king invited and welcomed strangers, good and bad alike. They were the ones who enjoyed the food and wine.

Jesus calls us by our name and invites us to come to the feast. It is up to us whether or not we accept this invitation. We are all invited personally to the table of the Lord. When we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, Jesus is the host and we are his guests. We come as we are, not how we would like to be. The

Eucharist is offered to us freely and we are invited to respond freely. It is God's gift to us and no one is to be excluded.

As Pope Francis reminds us, 'the Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak... the church is a place for everyone, with all their problems.'

'The God Who Speaks:'

Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always." "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong." The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to tread on the heights." "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."

(1 Chronicles 16:11).