Sunday Message
TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME





# A FEAST FOR EVERYONE

MATTHEW 22:1-14

In today's Gospel, Jesus says that the kingdom of God is like a king who gives a great feast for his son's wedding. He has sent out the invitations, but those he invited to the feast aren't interested. They don't show up. They make excuses and avoid committing themselves.

The king is furious and tells his servants that those he invited have shown themselves unworthy of the banquet. Instead, the servants are to go out onto the roads and streets and invite absolutely everyone they can find. There is no need for personal invitations. Everyone is welcome. Before long, the wedding hall is full.

In the parable, the king represents God. The great feast is a traditional Jewish image of God's kingdom. We see this in today's first reading from Isaiah. Matthew is telling the story of God's involvement with God's people, and how this is played out in the life of Jesus.

Matthew knows the end of the story. He has seen how Jesus was rejected by the people of Israel, for whom he came, just as they had rejected the prophets before him. They have rejected God's invitation over and over again, and so the Good News is now preached to the Gentiles. God is opening the gates of the kingdom to everyone everywhere.

God is a gracious host who hopes that everyone will come to his feast. It doesn't matter who we are or where we come from. All that is asked of us is that we respond wholeheartedly to this invitation by doing our best to live in tune with the values of God's kingdom. ■

## DO

Think of your attitude to the stranger, the newcomer, the one who is different. How welcoming are you?

## SAY

'Lord, help me to live in such a way that I will be able to feast at your heavenly banquet for ever. Amen.'

## PRAY

Pray for those who have rejected God's invitation to his wedding feast. Pray that you will respond more fully to God's invitation.

## LEARN

This is Prisoners' Sunday. We pray for prisoners and their families. We remember especially prisoners of conscience and political prisoners, those brave people made to suffer for their beliefs and moral courage.

## REFLECT

Several years ago, an American woman called Tamara Fowler was due to get married. Two hundred guests were invited. But then, a few weeks before the big day, Tamara decided to break off her engagement. Her parents were heartbroken. They had been looking forward to the wedding and had spent thousands of dollars planning a dinner reception at a top restaurant.

Her father thought about the situation, talked it over with his wife, and prayed about it one night before going to bed. The next morning, he later said, he knew what they had to do. They decided to go ahead with the wedding dinner as planned – but not with the original guest list. Instead, they invited a different group: 200 homeless men, women and children. The family contacted a local homeless charity. The woman who picked up the phone later said she was so shocked, she thought it was a prank call. The Fowlers explained what they wanted to do and that they especially wanted to help children.

And so, on the day the wedding was due to take place, buses brought dozens of needy people to one of Atlanta's top wedding venues. Children had space outside to play. Face painters and jugglers were hired to entertain them.

The children, it transpired, had to be shown how to eat hors d'oeuvres, how to use the right cutlery. They weren't used to fine china. At evening's end, the caterer was amazed. For the first time, she said, at the end of a big wedding there were no leftovers. Every plate was clean. Those special guests were fed, but they received more than a great meal that day – they received love. They felt included. They hadn't been forgotten.

That meal was a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven, an image of the heavenly feast. Pope Francis often described the church as a big tent and not a small chapel that holds only a few. He repeatedly stressed the importance of welcome and inclusion. Inclusion reflects God's mercy, he said, and God's mercy embraces everyone. Christians must mirror God's mercy by opening our hearts to others without judging or excluding anyone based on status, race, ability, or background. Inclusion, he emphasised, must go beyond rhetoric and be reflected in daily life. It should create a 'culture of social tenderness.'

Days after his election, Pope Leo said the same: 'We must be a church with open arms for everyone, open to all who need our presence, dialogue, love.'

As they sat in that hotel eating great food off of fine china, those homeless people must have said to themselves, 'I wish it could be like this all the time.' Of course, it couldn't. But they had been given a glimpse of how things could be, of how things should be.

To be Christian is to welcome and include. It's the opposite of them and us. Our challenge is to live in such a way as to make God's presence real and tangible, by creating homes, families, communities, and parishes that are welcoming and loving, so that ours will be a church of which it can be said: 'Here comes everybody.' ■

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

***If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,***
***Lord, who could stand?***
***But with you is found forgiveness,***
***O God of Israel.***

## COLLECT

May your grace, O Lord, we pray,
at all times go before us and follow after
and make us always determined
to carry out good works.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
***Amen.***

## FIRST READING Isaiah 25:6-10a

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.
He will swallow up death for ever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.
It will be said on that day,
'Behold, this is our God;
we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'
For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain.
The word of the Lord.
***Thanks be to God.***

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 23(22):1-3a. 3b-4. 5. 6. R. 6cd

R: ***In the LORD's own house shall I dwell***
***for length of days unending.***

1. The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me;
he revives my soul. R.

2. He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.
Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff will give me comfort. R.

3. You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. R.

4. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the LORD's own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending. R.

## SECOND READING Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians.
Brothers and sisters: I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
The word of the Lord.
***Thanks be to God.***

## ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL cf. Ephesians 1:17, 18

R: ***Alleluia, alleluia.***
May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
enlighten the eyes of our hearts,
so that we may know the hope to which he has called us.
R: ***Alleluia.***

## GOSPEL Matthew 22:1-14

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.
(for shorter form read between > <)
> At that time: Jesus again spoke to the chief priests and the elders of the people, in parables, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, "Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.'" But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find." And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.<
'But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'
The Gospel of the Lord.
***Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.***

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the prayers of your faithful
with the sacrificial offerings,
that, through these acts of devotedness,
we may pass over to the glory of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.
***Amen.***

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

***The rich suffer want and go hungry,***
***but those who seek the Lord lack no blessing.***

Or

***When the Lord appears, we shall be like him,***
***for we shall see him as he is.***

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We entreat your majesty most humbly, O Lord,
that, as you feed us with the nourishment
which comes from the most holy Body and Blood of your Son,
so you may make us sharers of his divine nature.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
***Amen.***

redemptorist publications

Sunday Message Commentary by Fr Gerard Moloney C.Ss.R. The Red Mass Leaflet. © Redemptorist Publications, Wolf's Lane, Chawton, Hants, GU34 3HQ, a registered charity limited by guarantee. Registered in England 03261721. **www.rpbooks.co.uk** Excerpts from the English translation of The Roman Missal © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. The text of Sacred Scripture is from the English Standard Version® of the Bible, Catholic Edition (ESV-CE), copyright © 2024 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved. ESV-CE Bible text and ESV-CE Lectionary used by permission of SPCK Publishing, London, 2024. Concordat cum originali Ann Blackett. Imprimatur + David Oakley, Bishop of Northampton 6 May 2026. Permission granted for distribution in the dioceses of Scotland. Published in Ireland by Redemptorist Communications (www.redcoms.org); Published in the UK by Redemptorist Publications.

carbon footprint