

Sunday Message

28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 15 October 2023 • Psalter Week 4

OPEN INVITATION

MATTHEW 22:1-14



Imagine how surprising it would be to receive a dinner invitation - from God! That's exactly what happens in today's Gospel, as Jesus continues to describe what the kingdom of God is like.

Jesus says that the kingdom of God is like a king who gave a great feast for his son's wedding. But the people he has invited to the feast are not interested. The guests don't show up. They make excuses and avoid committing themselves.

The king is furious, and tells his servants that the invited guests are 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 more need for personal invitations. Everyone is welcome. The king has gone to a lot of trouble, and doesn't want his efforts wasted. Before long, the wedding hall is full of guests.

In the parable, the king represents God. The great feast was a traditional Jewish image for God's kingdom. We see this in today's first reading from Isaiah. Matthew is telling the story of God's involvement with his people, and how that is played out in the life of Jesus. Matthew knows the end of the story. He has seen how Jesus has been rejected by the people of Israel, for whom he came. The people have rejected God's invitation over and over again, and so the Good News is now preached to the Gentiles. God is throwing open the gates of the kingdom to everyone, everywhere.

God is a gracious host who hopes that everyone will come to his feast. As Christians we are called to respond to his invitation. ■

PRAY

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

DO

Look at your life and your priorities. What excuses might be keeping you from putting God first?

SAY

"Lord, help me to say yes to you always. Amen."

LEARN

God's grace is unlimited.

God is a gracious host who hopes that everyone will come to his feast.

The wedding feast is an image of the kingdom of heaven.

REFLECT

Invitations can be wonderful. You are asked to go some place or attend some event, and you are delighted. You feel special, you feel wanted, and then there is the joy of anticipation – looking forward to the occasion.

On the other hand, there are few feelings worse than being excluded from a party or event, especially if we expected to be invited and find we have been left out. Many friendships have ended because of a failure to invite somebody – a family member or neighbour – to a wedding or a celebration of some kind. Those not invited feel hurt, snubbed, let down. The friendship may not recover.

The wonderful good news is that, when it comes to the heavenly feast, we don't have to worry about being invited. We have all been invited. Every one of us has been given a personal, gold-embossed invitation. 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 the kingdom. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

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

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

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,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 25:6-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

On this mountain,
the Lord of hosts will prepare for all people
a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine
wines,
of food rich and juicy, of fine strained wines.
On this mountain he will remove
the mourning veil covering all peoples,
and the shroud enwrapping all nations,
he will destroy Death for ever.
The Lord will wipe away
the tears from every cheek;
he will take away his people's shame
everywhere on earth,
for the Lord has said so.
That day, it will be said: See, this is our God
in whom we hoped for salvation;
the Lord is the one in whom we hoped.
We exult and we rejoice
that he has saved us;
for the hand of the Lord
rests on this mountain.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 22

Response:

In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever
and ever.

- 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,
to revive my drooping spirit. (R.)

- He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your
staff;
with these you give me comfort. (R.)

- You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. (R.)

- Surely goodness and kindness shall
follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. (R.)

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

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the
Philippians.

I know how to be poor, and I know how to be rich
too. I have been through my initiation and now
I am ready for anything anywhere: full stomach
or empty stomach, poverty, or plenty. There is
nothing I cannot master with the help of the One
who gives me strength. All the same, it was good
of you to share with me in my hardships. In return
my God will fulfil all your needs, in Christ Jesus,
as lavishly as only God can. Glory to God, our
Father, for ever and ever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! The Word was made flesh
and lived among us:
to all who did accept him he gave power to
become children of God. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 22:1-14

(For shorter form read between >>
Matthew 22:1-10)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

>Jesus began to speak to the chief priests and
elders of the people in parables: "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 despatched 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. <When the king came in to look at
the guests he noticed one man who was not
wearing a wedding garment, and said to him,
"How did you get in here, my friend, without a
wedding garment?" And the man was silent. Then
the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand
and foot and throw him out into the dark, where

there will be weeping and grinding of teeth."
For many are called, but few are chosen.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under

Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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.

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.