

Reflection for the 28th Sunday of Ordinary time, Cycle A

The lectionary translation of the readings for this Sunday can be found at <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/101523.cfm>

1st Reading: *Isaiah 25:6–10a*

Our selection today is from a section of Isaiah called the Apocalypse of Isaiah. Our selection depicts the eschatological banquet, a feast symbolizing eternal happiness. (JBC) This may be what Jesus was referring to when, at the Last Supper, he told the disciples that he would not drink wine again until the kingdom of God comes. (Mt 26:29, Mk 14:25, Lk 22:18) (JBC) The Anchor Yale Bible Commentary (AYBC) points out that it is part of the “fuller and richer meaning of the Christian [Eucharist].”

2nd Reading: *Philippians 4:12–14, 19-20*

At the end of the letter to the Philippians, Paul is thanking them for their monetary assistance to him and his mission. He explains that he has always had a policy of being self-sufficient but is in prison now so their help is really appreciated. This is an example of Christian communities financial assisting the mission of the Church.

Gospel: *Matthew 22:1–14*

“ Many are invited, but few are chosen.” Mt 22:14

I don't understand young people anymore. I'm too old and life is changing too fast for me to keep up. I asked a young person once why he was always checking his phone. He said, in case there is a party somewhere, I don't want to miss out. I get that... everybody wants to have a good time.

So what do you think was wrong with the wedding guests, in our Gospel, who didn't show up for the party? Mark's and Luke's Gospels give reasons but Matthew just says they refused to come, or they ignored the invitation, or worse, they killed his servants! What is that about?

The invited guests represent the ancient Jewish people. Scripture tells us that they, on several occasions, either turned away from God or simply failed to follow his commands. They also, in Scripture, are accused of ignoring or killing the prophets who were sent to call them back to God and his way.

Our parable today indicates that this king expected proper action from his guests. They couldn't just show up. They actually had to act like his guests. Remember the guy that got thrown out, bound hand and foot, because he didn't have the right garment on?

I think that is what the garment is all about. It didn't have to be special, a clean tunic would have been acceptable. With a clean tunic, he would have been acting the way a guest at a wedding feast should.

It reminds me of baptism. When the newly baptized receives the white garment, the celebrant says:

“...you have become a new creation, and have clothed yourself in Christ. See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven.”

It's as simple as that; Christ is our wedding garment. We have put on Christ and now we have to live conspicuously as his disciples. We are already part of the many who were invited. Let's also be part of the few who are chosen.

By the way, if we truly live the life of discipleship, if we live the law of love, then life truly becomes a banquet like that described in our first reading.

This is a good week for us to reflect on how we are doing living the life of discipleship. Where are we bringing God's love to people? Where are we not? What can we do to become better disciples?

Reflection:

But when the king came in to meet the guests he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment. He said to him, 'My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?' But he was reduced to silence. Then the king said to his attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.' Many are invited, but few are chosen." Mt 22:11-14

Question:

What words or phrases grabbed your attention during the Liturgy of the Word on Sunday? What connection do those words or phrases have to your day-to-day life? (Why do you think they grabbed your attention?) What might God be trying to say to you through these words or phrases? What response should you make? What action should you take?

Alternative:

Reflect upon/Share about someone whom you think is a good example of being a disciple and living the law of love. (Respect their privacy and don't share their name.) What is it about that person's way of living that makes them a good example? What can you change in your life to make yourself a better example of discipleship?

Verse by Verse:

Mt 22:1 "Jesus again in reply spoke to them in parables..." | Our Lectionary replaces "them" with "the chief priests and elders of the people" to let us know that he is still speaking to the chief priests and elders. The identification of his audience is noted in Mt 21:28.

Mt 22:7 "The king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murders and burned their city." | This may be an allusion to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE. (JBC)

Mt 22:8 "...those who were invited are not worthy to come." | JBC indicates that this includes the Jewish people and their leaders.

Mt 22:9 "...invite to the feast whomever you find..." | This may allude to the gentile Christians.

Mt 22:11 "...he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment." | Evidently the proper attire for a wedding was simply clean clothes. This verse shows that it is not enough to be invited and show up, you have to walk the walk, too.