

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A October 11 2026

Readings

Is 25:6-10a

Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

Phil 4:12-14, 19-20

Mt 22:1-14

Liam Tomás O'Doherty, O.S.A.
Catholic Sasaoka Church
Fukuoka, Japan

When I was growing up in suburban Philadelphia, the nearly 20 cousins on my Dad's side of the family all lived within 6 miles of each other.

At Christmas, we all gathered at Nana's house. The grown-ups' table in the dining room. The kids at folding card tables in the living room.

What a feast it was! Turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, Irish bread, string beans and sliced almonds, mashed turnips with bits of bacon, cranberry sauce, stuffing, mixed nuts, yams, mince pie, gingerbread, ice cream...and Nana's fruitcake!

I remember the grown-ups talking and laughing around the "big" table and the kids having fun around the card tables in the living room.

Later, we gathered in the living room after the kids' table had been taken down for singing and dancing.

It was just so much fun! Being together, eating, talking together!

I was thinking about those Christmas dinners at Nana's as I reflected on that beautiful passage from Isaiah the prophet:

On this mountain the LORD of hosts
will provide for all peoples
a feast of rich food and choice wines,
juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines.
On this mountain he will destroy
the veil that veils all peoples...

It's an image of heaven. And that is what God, through the prophet Isaiah, is saying to his people now.

Isaiah the prophet was speaking to a people who have been beaten up terribly. They had suffered from war and oppression. Everything was a mess. Isaiah was holding out hope for his people. He's saying that God has not forgotten you and eventually, eventually you will receive a rich, rich harvest. So stay faithful!

Mt. Zion! Jerusalem! That's God's holy mountain...and Heaven!

That is where God will call you, unite you, and fill you with his delights!

That was the call of Isaiah the prophet.

Centuries later, Jesus uses a parable about another feast. And when you reflect on this parable of the wedding feast, it's not the same hopeful story that you get from Isaiah the prophet. As a matter of fact, when you're listening to it and reflecting on it, a person might say: "Is this king supposed to represent God? He almost sounds like a psychotic tyrant." Granted, the people invited to the wedding feast did not treat the king's servants well.

But his reaction is severe! "The king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city."

There seems to be something crazy, something out of proportion on both sides.

Here's the thing: all these very important people, the invited guests, have snubbed the king. And so the king says: "I've got to fill up the hall for my son." So he invites everybody! It's like: Everybody in your town, and the next town, and the town beyond that, all are invited to this feast no matter what their life is like! They're all invited...and they all come!

And then we have this poor guy who's not dressed right, so he's kicked out! What in heaven's name is going on in this story? I've done some research on this, and you'll be happy to

know that the biblical scholars who spend their days and nights studying the scriptures tell us:

“Do not take this story literally.” That’s a sigh of relief.

Well, then, what is Jesus’ aim in telling this parable? The scholars say Jesus tells this story to get people’s attention! He wants people to understand the urgency of accepting the kingdom of God in our lives - that it is urgent!

It’s not something that we can postpone!

It’s not something that we can shrug off!

It’s not something for tomorrow. It’s for now!

Accept it, because if you accept it, then you are in for a wonderful surprise.

And if we accept it, then we dress properly. And I’m not talking about folks who are here in shorts or casual clothes.

No, we dress properly when we put on Christ.

We put on his compassion. We put on his love.

We put on his hospitality and his welcome.

All people are part of his family!

That’s the clothes he wants us to wear.

And our very presence here today tells us, with all of our imperfections, that we’re struggling to do just that: to put on Christ.

And so, the gift that he gives to us, the gift of heaven, is not something to be earned. It is just that: a GIFT. And if we accept the gift, we’re in. And if we appreciate the gift, then we try to be like the Giver. And be just as welcoming and compassionate as he is.