



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 15th October 2023 - The Twenty Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Relax & Remember

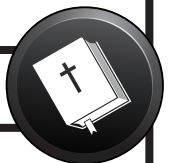
Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



2 Read

Taken from the Gospel for Sunday 15th October 2023 (Matthew 22:1-10): An Invitation to the Wedding Feast

Jesus said to the chief priests and the 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 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 onto 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 into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth." For many are called but few are chosen.'



3 Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

A wedding is a time of joy and of completion after long preparation, a time of love and of complete satisfaction. In Judaism at the time of Jesus, the coming of the Messiah is often compared to the joy of a wedding-feast. The marriage-feast at Cana must have been some party! At Mary's request Jesus produced 900 litres of wine. The Letter to the Ephesians teaches that the love in a human wedding is only a foretaste of Christ's love for his bride, the Church. In the story of the royal wedding in this Sunday's Gospel, however, two things go drastically wrong. First, the original wedding guests refuse to come. Not only do they refuse, but they brutally maltreat the innocent messengers, and the king (who must represent God) ruthlessly burns down their city. Secondly, the man who has no wedding-garment is thrown out: a wedding-garment is a standard Jewish image for works of generosity expected of every faithful Jew. For us Christians too, the story constitutes a double warning.

Are we alert and listening for God's call? Do we rest secure in being called Christians and leave the challenging jobs to others?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

4 Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 15th October 2023



First Reading: *The Lord's Banquet*

Isaiah 25:6-10

On this mountain, the Lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples 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 reading begins with the image of the messianic banquet, the banquet which the Lord is preparing for the end of time; Jesus takes up this image in the gospel story of the wedding-feast. After the first lines the image changes; the text now speaks of the removal of the mourning veil and the destruction of death, when every tear will be wiped away. In the earlier traditions of the Bible the dead were thought to lead a wretched existence in 'Sheol', a life which is no life, a sort of half-existence without power or substance, where the dead cannot even praise God. Gradually Israel came to realise that God's love is so enveloping and so enduring that God cannot desert or abandon his faithful even in death; nor can death cut off from God those who are faithful. This text from Isaiah is one of the crucial passages where the permanent, saving strength of God's love is expressed. Speaking to the Sadducees (who did not believe in the resurrection) Jesus will say, 'God is the God not of the dead but of the living'. Paul will say, 'Neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus'.

What hope does this passage hold out for those who are faithful? Who are the faithful?

Second Reading: *Ready for Anything – with the Help of God*

Philippians 4:12-14. 19-20

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, forever and ever. Amen.

Paul has reached the final greetings of his letter to the Philippians. Even when he is writing to this beloved community at Philippi, from whom alone he would accept gifts, Paul is anxious to maintain his independence. In the ancient world, as in the modern world, a favour demands a return-favour: 'there is no such thing as a free dinner'! So Paul points out that he could manage without the gift they have given him, since all his strength comes from God. But he also wishes them the blessing of the fulfilment of all their needs from the glory of God in Christ Jesus. This is an incomparable blessing, whose awesome value is obscured by our careless use of the term 'glory'. The glory of God is a term frightening in its richness. No human being can see God and live, but Moses did for a moment glimpse God's glory – after which his face was so seared that he had to wear a veil over it. It is a glory which, by contrast, fills Isaiah with dread at his own sinfulness, and which makes Ezekiel fall to the ground. It is the experience of the limitless power and majesty of God.

Am I ready "for anything, anywhere"?

“The limitless power and majesty of God.”

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*
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