

## Fr James' homily for the Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 25:6-10  
Second Reading: Philippians 4:12-20  
Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14



Let's be clear from the start. When Jesus says that *“many are called but few are chosen”* this is not some sort of threat. It seems a bit like it. As always in his parables Jesus says something shocking or extreme in order to make us think about the bigger issues. A bit like last week, the issue here is that our response to God's call is crucial and, whilst God is both generous and patient, the last result depends on us.

Jesus likens the Kingdom of heaven to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. Notice that the Father - God the Father - is giving the feast for his son - God the Son - and his bride - that's us, the Church. Jesus is the marriage of the divine with the created, the human, and we his followers are invited to join in the joy of this union. The joyful intimacy of the Father and the Son is now offered to us to be shared. Listen to the voice of the prophet Isaiah- again like last week - to learn about the details of the banquet. He describes a feast of richness and endless quality and delight.

This image is to describe what things are like when God gets his due. When we are focussed on God and looking in the right direction, as it were. The hunger that is at the centre of the human heart can only be satisfied with the vision of God, and yet we look here and there for satisfaction, and even put up with what we know doesn't work... for fear perhaps of what we might find. (The big fear, as Isaiah says, the thing that clouds our vision and leads us off in all sorts of false leads, is the fear of death).

There is an edge to the parable, of course. It is the king who is doing the inviting and it is a unique event: the wedding of his son. We can see how terribly important it is to respond to the invitation of the king of kings. Many hear the invitation of God to enter into intimacy with him, to make him the centre and meaning of our lives and of every relationship we have, to be married to him in Christ Jesus...and often so many find the most pathetic excuses not to respond. All God wants is for us to make a little effort, and he will do the rest. Then there's the one man who sums it all up: he makes no effort to dress. When given the opportunity to acknowledge the generosity of his host, he is silent. He cannot think past his own self-absorption.

We must look away from ourselves to the generosity of God *“See, this is our God”* as Isaiah says. The image of the mountain is all about this. Mountains inspire awe in us and hold an attraction, a yearning to see what it is like at the top! The mountain is a symbol of our union with God - and appears as such throughout the scriptures.

As we seek daily to make a response to God's grace, to make God's call our choice, if you like, let us reflect on how our worship, our Mass, tells the same story. Here we come from different situations and walks of life, but equal in looking towards God and seeking to go up a mountain, out of the world the God. In the Mass, God comes to us, gathers us, speaks with us, feeds us with the best possible food, the body, blood, soul and divinity of his son. Here is the great banquet which is a preparation for living in that eternal space. We are surrounded by many voices telling us what we should be doing. Listen for the one voice asking **"how did you get in here?"** How do we answer, other than **"Lord, I am not worthy...but only say the word"**. Amen.

*Fr James and Fr Tom wish you a blessed Sunday. Keep safe and well, and never hesitate to pick up the telephone and be in touch. See you in church I hope! Keep in close contact with the website for news of how practical plans are developing.*