

**TWENTY-EIGHTH
SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God our King,
you call us to share your life
and be happy with you forever.
Do not let us be deaf
to your voice
by our selfishness;
guide us along the path of love,
so that one day we will
be worthy to be with you
at heaven's great family meal,
and with Jesus, your Son,
who lives with you,
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Both of our readings focus on the great banquet as the symbolic image of the reign of God.

Isaiah speaks of a time when we will sit at the table and enjoy the richness of God's gifts. There will be no more suffering, no violence, no evil, no tears. All will be joy, and it will last forever.

Matthew takes up this symbol in the parables of today's Gospel but applies it to the reign of God now. The focus of this parable is not the future but the invitation to share in the wedding feast now. The reign is here but not seen or accepted by all who have been invited. We are called by this parable to be ready, not only for the heavenly banquet, but for the banquet now—the reign of God among us with the eucharistic banquet as our celebration of that reality present and to come. Daily we choose to accept the invitation or to be too busy about other affairs.

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 25:6-10a*

This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah said to the people,

"God is going to give a big banquet,
a feast with all kinds of good food.
This feast will be celebrated here
on God's holy mountain.
And God will destroy all evil
that has hurt people of every nation.
God will destroy the power of death
and wipe away the tears from everyone's eyes.
God will forgive everyone who has sinned.
This will happen
because our God said it would.

"And when it happens, people will say,

"This is the God we have been waiting for,
the God who will save us.

So let us be glad and rejoice in salvation.'

"Yes, the hand of God is here
and will stay on this holy mountain.
God will be with us forever!"

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 23*

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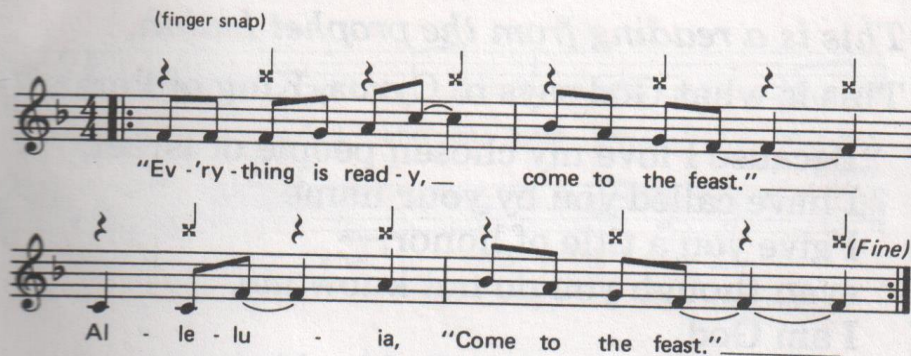
al - ways, just to fol - low my friend.

VERSES:

to Response

1. I have all I need. You are my shep-herd, your hand is with me.
2. When path-ways are dark, you are there guid - ing me, keep-ing me safe.
3. You give me to eat. You make me wel-come, you fill me with joy.
4. Your good-ness I know. Your love will be with me all of my life.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



GOSPEL: *Matthew 22: 1-10*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

One day, Jesus told this story to the chief priests and leaders.

"Once there was a king who gave a big feast for his son's wedding. But when the servants went to get all the people who were invited, they wouldn't come. So the king said to the servants,

'Go and tell them that the feast is ready, and I have prepared a wonderful dinner for them. Everything is ready; come to the feast.'

"But the people who were invited didn't care. They stayed home and took care of their farms and businesses. Some of them hurt and even killed servants who came to tell them it was time to come. The king was angry, and he sent his soldiers to punish those people. Then he said to some other servants,

'The wedding is ready, but the people we invited weren't good enough to come. Go now into the towns and invite anyone you see.'

"So the servants went out and invited everyone, good people and bad people. And soon the wedding hall was filled with people."

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

After the Gospel, invite the children to imagine themselves as one who prepares a big party for a special celebration—a special birthday, maybe.

- What food would you prepare?
- What decorations would you make?
- What games would you have ready?
- Who would you invite?
- Would you enjoy getting your party ready?

Now, suppose on the day of the party, when everything is ready, none of your friends come!

- How would you feel?
- Are those really your friends?

Help the children see the parallels in today's Gospel. Explain to them that this is a story about Jesus inviting people to live with him and celebrate with him. Some people didn't want to be with Jesus, so he invited other people, especially sinners. They are the ones who were happy to come.

Even now Jesus invites us to be with him, to live as sisters and brothers and to share in his banquet at mass. Some people don't want to do that. Do we?

When we go to a wedding or a special party, we wear special clothes, we take a gift, we say special things to the bride and groom or the person who is celebrating a birthday. We do special things; we get ready for the special occasion. How can we show Jesus we are happy he invited us to be with him?

You *may* wish to add: "Every Sunday, just before communion, the priest says, 'Happy are we who are invited to this banquet.' In our hearts we can say, 'Yes, Lord, I am happy. Thank you for inviting me.'"