

The 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A – 10/11/26 – Msgr. Peter Quang Nguyen

First Reading – Isaiah 25:6-10a: The LORD promises to provide abundantly for all and remove obstacles that blind nations. He will end death, comfort his people, and eradicate their disgrace. All will recognize and rejoice in God's salvation.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 23: The LORD, as a caring shepherd, provides and protects. He leads in safety, offers comfort in danger, and honors in the presence of enemies. With the LORD's enduring kindness, one finds eternal refuge in His house.

Second Reading – Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20: Paul expresses contentment in all situations, whether in scarcity or plenty. Through Christ's strength, he remains resilient. He acknowledges the support of others and assures God's provision for their needs, praising God eternally.

Gospel – Matthew 22:1-14 or 22:1-10: Jesus shares a parable about a king who hosts a wedding feast for his son. Initially, invited guests refuse the invitation. After facing consequences, the king invites all, but emphasizes the importance of being appropriately prepared. Few truly qualify.

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

“THE HEAVENLY WEDDING FEAST”

Today, Jesus likens the Kingdom of Heaven to a wedding feast. Initially, God sent prophets to invite the Jewish people to partake in the salvation offered by Christ—to accept the Gospel and attain eternal life—but they refused. Subsequently, the Apostles were sent to preach first to the Jewish people, yet they too rejected the invitation (proving themselves unworthy of the wedding feast). Ultimately, the Gospel was proclaimed to people across the globe—inviting everyone, regardless of wealth, poverty, or disability, to enter the Lord's Church and share in the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. The Context of the Parable

Many people wonder: Why, after inviting guests from all walks of life—including the destitute, the disabled, the lame, and the blind—did the host demand proper attire and then punish those who failed to comply?

To understand this, one must look at Jewish wedding customs: hosts would acquire or rent wedding garments corresponding to the number of invited guests (guest lists were typically small), or provide an outer wrap for them to wear. Before sitting at the banquet table, guests would wash their hands and feet and put on the wedding garment. Thus, if a guest arrived at the feast but refused to wear the provided wedding attire—ignoring the established rituals and customs—they would face punishment.

This signifies that once one has joined the Lord's Church and embraced the faith, one must observe the rules of Christian living (the laws of God and the Church) and “put on” holiness (the wedding garment); otherwise, one risks being cast out and facing eternal condemnation. While the Jewish people considered themselves a chosen race set apart from all others, the Catholic Church stands for equality—transcending hierarchy, wealth, or poverty—united by the same Salvation and the same Kingdom of God. Yet, the mere fact of Baptism or one's specific role within the Church (whether clergy or laity) does not guarantee entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. Rather, one must live out the commitments made upon joining the Church—much like a wedding guest who must wear the proper wedding attire.

2. An analysis of the parable.

The parable tells of a king who sent servants to invite many guests to his son's wedding; however, the initial invitees refused and even mistreated the king's messengers. Enraged, the king destroyed the murderers and sent messengers out to the crossroads to invite anyone and everyone to the banquet.

There are various ways people refuse the invitation to the wedding feast:

“Busy visiting the farm”: A metaphor for being preoccupied with material possessions. The Gospel is proclaimed to us, and God’s Word invites us to return to the Church; yet, we become entangled in concerns about land, housing, and assets—things that stifle our faith. We choose wealth and money over God.

“Busy with business”: A metaphor for being preoccupied with one’s career. Our profession and the means of making a living dominate our thoughts, leaving no room for God. Heeding the Gospel’s demands—such as avoiding dishonesty or cutthroat competition—or returning to God and the Church might mean losing career opportunities; consequently, we blindly prioritize our careers over following God. A comparison with Luke 14:14–24 reveals an additional excuse: "being busy getting married." This serves as a metaphor for entanglements in romantic attachments and carnal pleasures. Such affections—particularly romantic ones—can overpower reason, sincere love, and moral principles. People may give in to the flesh, engage in hasty romances, cohabit, or enter into illicit unions, ultimately disregarding moral laws. They choose worldly love over love for God.

The three attitudes depicted in the parable are mirrored in the lives of people today. Many decline or hesitate when faced with God’s invitation. They decline because they value material wealth more than God; because they are too busy with work to make time for Him; or because their love for the world, pleasures, and carnal desires outweighs their love for God. Others hesitate, complacently waiting until the final moments of their lives to follow God and return to the Church—yet no one knows what the future holds.

When we seek only physical gratification in this life, our spiritual life withers; conversely, when we embrace sacrifice—even at the cost of some physical comfort—our eternal life flourishes.

By alluding to the self-assured Jewish people—who knew God first yet forfeited the chance to recognize the Gospel in Him—Jesus warns us against complacency or negligence in our duties. Instead, we must always be willing to sacrifice, strive, and persevere on the path of following Him. In life, fortunes can change in an instant; someone who was once a notorious sinner may come to repent and lead a virtuous, godly life. Conversely, there are those who were once virtuous and holy but have now become dissolute, sinful, and depraved.

Lord Jesus, often we practice our faith yet remain caught up in the rat race and consumed by work, allowing these pursuits to crowd out the time meant for You. Upon hearing Your message in today’s Gospel parable, may we recognize our shortcomings and amend our ways; help us to prioritize Your work above all else and frequently approach the Holy Banquet—a foretaste of the eternal feast in Your Kingdom to come. Amen.