



Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
† Sunday 15th October 2017

In England and Wales Cycle of Prayer:

For the spread of the Gospel, the harvest

Keynote: Invited as guests to the banquet of the kingdom of God

Prophet Isaiah 25:6-10

After a terrible battle over evil, the Lord God in triumph is enthroned at a magnificent victory celebration – there follows a great banquet. To this celebration rich and poor are invited: *‘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.’* The banquet theme is used in many places in scripture to illustrate the fellowship, the unity, and era of peace and plenty that is the inheritance of the People of God. After the victory comes peace in the reign of God, *‘The Lord God will wipe away the tears from every cheek; he will take away his people’s shame... this is our God in whom we hoped for salvation... we exult and we rejoice that he has saved us.’* The heavenly messianic banquet is a happy time after all the sadness and woes that are part of the human condition. Remember we are all invited to the feast.

Responsorial Psalm 22 [23] – A psalm celebrating God’s love and hospitality

Letter of Paul to the Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

Paul, still a prisoner – has himself undergone many sufferings and hardships as he journeyed preaching the gospel – he has ‘the T-shirt’ as we say. *‘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.’* Thanking his converts and friends for thinking of him, he says, *‘There is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One who gives me strength... it was good of you to share with me in my hardships. In return my God will fulfil all your needs in Christ Jesus ... Glory to God, our Father, forever and ever. Amen.’*

Gospel according to Matthew 22:1-14

This gospel passage follows on the parable last week about the vineyard and the wicked tenants. *‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son’s wedding,’* says Jesus. Many will know what it is like to feel special, to be an invited guest to the important party. That ‘feeling invited’ is one part of the parable. But maybe the more important element is just ‘who is invited’ to this messianic banquet. Those first invited, proved unsuited, they had other life priorities, *‘they were not interested, one went off to his farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his servants and maltreated them.’* Not surprisingly, the king was furious, but *‘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 and collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests.’* The stranger, the traveller; the foreigner – everyone – is welcome to the messianic feast. But don’t attend unsuited! Those attending are to be clothed in Christ – *‘for many are called but few are chosen.’*