

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Clothed for the Wedding

Missale Romanum 1962 · Proper of Time · 4 October 2026

A homily

“Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment?”

The king asks that question near the end of today’s Gospel. He asks it of a man who had done almost everything right. He was invited, and he came. He did not go off to his farm or his business, or lay hands on the servants. He sat down at the king’s table. Then the king came in to see his guests, called this man “Friend”, and asked him one question. “But he was silent.”

Of everyone in the parable, that man is the most like us. We were invited, and we have come. We are inside. So his question is ours: what should he have been wearing?

Remember how the hall was filled. The first guests “would not come”. Called again, they “went their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise”, and the rest killed the servants. So the king sent his servants into the highways, and they gathered “both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests.”

St John Chrysostom grants that the excuses seem reasonable, and draws the lesson: “though the things which hinder us be necessary, to set the things spiritual at a higher price than all.” Today’s Collect asks for the freedom to do it: that “being free both in soul and body” we may “perform thy service”. And Chrysostom reminded his people: “Hear whence ye were called. From the highway.” We were found on the road, and brought in.

What, then, is the wedding garment? St Gregory the Great asked the people of Rome: if it is baptism, or faith, who ever came into this wedding without them? Whatever the man lacks, it is not what brought him in.

St Augustine asked whether it might be the altar, or what is received there, and answered: “But no; we see that many eat, and ‘eat and drink judgment to themselves.’” The garment, he says, “is in the heart,

not on the body”. The servants never noticed the man. The king did.

Both give one answer: the garment is charity. Gregory gives the reason. Charity is rightly called the wedding garment, he says, because our Maker himself had it when he came to the wedding at which he joined the Church to himself. The garment is the Bridegroom’s own dress. The king calls the man “Friend” and still condemns him, and Gregory hears in that word a friend by faith, and no friend by what he has done.

Listen again to the Epistle. “Put on the new man,” says St Paul, “who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth.” The Epistle commands us to be clothed; the Gospel ends with a man who is not. St Jerome joins the two himself. The wedding garment, he writes, is the Lord’s commandments and the works that make up the garment of the new man. And on this same Epistle he says who the new man is: Christ, with whom all believers ought to be clothed.

St Paul gives the new man four plain acts. “Putting away lying, speak ye the truth, every man with his neighbour. For we are members one of another.” “Be angry: and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger.” “Give not place to the devil.” And the thief: “let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffereth need.”

Truth to your neighbour. Anger ended before sunset. No foothold for the devil. Hands that work in order to give. That is what the wedding garment looks like on an ordinary weekday.

Look at the hands. The king has the man bound hand and foot. St Gregory says the binding had begun long before. Hands that gave nothing to the needy, and feet that would not visit the sick, were already bound from doing good, by their own will. Between the lessons, the Gradual prays for “the lifting up of my hands, as evening sacrifice.”

St Hilary of Poitiers says that to spread the hands is the posture of prayer, but to lift them is to do the work. The evening sacrifice that pleases God, he says, is the one our Lord names at the judgment: “I was hungry, and you gave me to eat.”

St Augustine hears the Gradual’s verse differently: first of Christ, who laid down his life upon the Cross as the day sank towards evening. He says: “That then is the ‘evening sacrifice,’ the Passion of the Lord, the Cross of the Lord”; and it “produced, in His Resurrection, a morning offering.” Hilary looks at our hands, Augustine at the Lord’s, and we need both. The charity the king looks for in us is the charity his Son wore on the Cross, “praying to His Father for His enemies”, as Augustine says.

That sacrifice is not only remembered here. On this altar the one sacrifice of the Cross is made present, and the risen Christ gives his Body and Blood to those who come to his table.

But a fair question rises. If the guests were swept in from the highways, how could any of them have had a garment? And if the garment is charity, which of us can weave it alone?

At the Communion we will hear: “Thou hast commanded thy commandments to be kept most diligently. O! that my ways may be directed to keep thy justifications.” A command, and then a wish. Of that wish St Augustine says: “When thou hearest, ‘O that,’ recognise the words of one wishing; and having recognised the expression of a wish, lay aside the pride of presumption.” And he concludes: “God must be prayed to grant Himself what He enjoineth.”

St Hilary looks at it from the other side. For him the garment is the glory of the Holy Spirit, received at baptism, to be kept spotless until the kingdom. He and Gregory differ over what to call it and where it begins; but both mean something the baptized can lose, or never put on.

So the garment is God’s gift, and we are still to put it on and keep it: by doing, and by asking. Augustine says both: “Clothe others, and ye are clothed yourselves”; and, “Run to Him, beseech Him; He knoweth how to sanctify His faithful ones, He

knoweth how to clothe His naked ones.” The Mass opened with the Lord’s promise: “in whatever distress they call on me, I will hear them”. And the prayer after Communion asks that God’s healing work “make us always obedient to thy commandments”.

Augustine taught that there are “two feasts of the Lord; one to which the good and evil come, the other to which the evil come not.” The feast of today’s Gospel, he said, is the first; he called it the Lord’s Table and the Feast of the Holy Scriptures. Of it he said: “Be that feast which now is, received worthily, that we may attain to the other.” And he warned those coming to the Lord’s Table not to pray: “O that mine enemy might die!”

So there are two wishes, each beginning “O that”. One asks God to destroy whoever has hurt us. The other asks God to set our own ways straight. Which will we bring to the altar today?

Before you come, ask yourself St Gregory’s questions: whether you hold hatred against anyone; whether envy of someone else’s happiness burns in you. Then, this week, do three things. If you are angry with someone, settle it before the sun goes down, or at least forgive him before God today. Let your hands give something that costs you: food, clothing, an hour with someone sick. And every morning, pray the Communion’s words: “O! that my ways may be directed to keep thy justifications.”

The king in the parable came in once and found one guest unready. He has not yet come in for us. St Gregory says that we know we are called, but not whether we are chosen. That is a reason to be humble, not to despair. For to anyone who wears the garment imperfectly, Gregory offers the psalm’s hope: “Thy eyes did see my imperfect being.”

So let us come to the table clothed in charity: the new man, Christ himself put on. When the king comes in to see his guests, may he find his Son’s own dress on us. And may he say to us, without reproach, the word he said to that silent man: “Friend”. The one who calls us is the one who clothes us. He knows how to clothe his naked ones.

Note on Sources and Delivery

Audience and occasion. An adult parish assembly, at the Mass *Dominica decima nona post Pentecosten*, II classis, of the 1962 *Missale Romanum*, editio typica, pp. 411–412, nos. 1679–1688, for the occurrence of 4 October 2026.

Length and pace. The spoken body runs to 1,453 words, about 11.2 to 12.1 minutes at an unhurried 120 to 130 words a minute by arithmetic alone; no one has delivered or timed it. It was read through in full, silently, for sense and ease of speech.

Relation to the reviewed readings. The homily joins the first and third of the full study’s three readings of the whole Mass: *The Garment the King Looks For* (Gregory’s and Augustine’s charity, Jerome’s new man who is Christ, the Epistle’s four acts, the bound and the lifted hands, and the Communion’s wish as a prayer for grace) and *The Feast That Now Is* (Augustine’s two feasts, his table that is not the garment, and his evening sacrifice of the Passion). From the second, *The Invitation Refused and Carried to the Highways*, it takes only the story of the call and Chrysostom’s two sentences; it does not say who the first invited or the highways were. It speaks two disagreements the study keeps: Augustine against Hilary on the evening sacrifice, and Hilary’s baptismal gift beside Gregory’s and Augustine’s charity. Jerome joins the new man to the garment himself. The other joins are the homily’s own and credited to no Father: the Collect beside the excuses, the charity the Bridegroom wore on the Cross, the Communion’s wish against the one Augustine forbids, and the Introit’s promise beside the asking. So are the sentences on the altar, the Church’s faith in the preacher’s own voice; no Father is said to call the wedding feast the Eucharist. The Alleluia, Offertory and Secret are left to the studies.

Texts quoted, and their route. Scripture is the Douay–Rheims, Challoner’s revision, at the canonical verses. The Introit’s antiphon, the Collect and the Postcommunion are quoted in the anonymous English printed by Eugene Cummiskey at Philadelphia in 1861, a historical study aid and not an approved liturgical translation of the 1962 Missal; the Postcommunion’s “healing work” names the Latin *medicinalis operatio*, and the 1861 “these thy mysteries” is not quoted. Augustine and Chrysostom are quoted in the English of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Gregory, Jerome and Hilary are reported in English paraphrase of their Latin, and their words are not quoted.

Exact loci. Introit, no. 1679; Collect, no. 1680; Epistle, Eph 4:24–28, no. 1681; Gradual, Ps 140:2 (141:2), no. 1682; Gospel, Mt 22:3, 5, 10, 12, no. 1684; Communion, Ps 118:4–5 (119:4–5), no. 1687; Postcommunion, no. 1688; with Mt 25:35 and Ps 138:16 (139:16). Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 69. Gregory, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 38, 9 (not baptism or faith, but charity), 11 (hatred and envy), 12 (friend by faith; Ps 138:16), 13 (the bound hands) and 14 (called and chosen). Augustine, *Sermo* 90, 1, 4, 5 and 9, and *Sermo* 95, 7; *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 118, Aleph 5, and 140, 3. Jerome on Mt 22:11–12 (PL 26, col. 160) and on Eph 4:24 (col. 508). Hilary on Mt 22:11 (PL 9, col. 1044) and on Ps 140:2 (cols. 825–826).

References

- *Missale Romanum ex decreto Sacrosancti Concilii Tridentini restitutum, Summorum Pontificum cura recognitum*, editio typica (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1962), CMAA facsimile, pp. 411–412, nos. 1679–1688.
- *The Roman Missal, Translated into the English Language for the Use of the Laity* (Philadelphia: Eugene Cummiskey, 1861), pp. 445–448 (XIX Sunday after Pentecost, Introit, Collect, Postcommunion).
- The Holy Bible, Douay–Rheims version, Challoner’s revision: Ps 118:4–5 (119:4–5); 138:16 (139:16); 140:2 (141:2); Mt 22:3, 5, 10, 12; 25:35; Eph 4:24–28.
- St John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 69, trans. G. Prevost, rev. M. B. Riddle, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., vol. 10.
- St Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 38, 9 and 11–14, Latin Wikisource transcription of Migne’s text; paraphrased, not quoted.
- St Augustine, *Sermones* 90 and 95 (Sermons XL and XLV), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., vol. 6: *Sermo* 90, 1, 4–5, 9; *Sermo* 95, 7. *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 118, Aleph 5, and 140, 3 (Psalms CXIX and CXLI in that translation), 1st ser., vol. 8.
- St Jerome, *Commentarii in Matthaeum* III and *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Ephesios* II, in Migne, PL 26 (Paris, 1845), cols. 160 and 508; paraphrased, not quoted.
- St Hilary of Poitiers, *Commentarius in Matthaeum* 22, 7, and *Tractatus super Psalmos*, in Ps. 140, 3–4, in Migne, PL 9 (Paris, 1844), cols. 1044 and 825–826; paraphrased, not quoted.

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