

The Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Dominica XXVIII “per annum”

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The king’s wedding feast:
a study of the proper in three interpretations

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Who Will Come to the King's Wedding?

The Gospel of this Sunday is a story about an invitation. “The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come.” The king sends again, with word that the dinner is ready and the fatlings killed; the invited neglect it, “one to his farm and another to his merchandise”, and the rest seize the servants and kill them. The king’s armies destroy the murderers and burn their city. Then the king turns to the roads: “Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests” (Mt 22:2–3, 9–10). In the longer form of the reading the story goes on. “The king went in to see the guests: and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent.” The man is bound and cast out, “For many are called, but few are chosen” (22:11–14).

Scripture is quoted throughout in the Douay–Rheims version as revised by Bishop Challoner, a public-domain study translation made from the Latin Vulgate. It is not the text proclaimed at Mass: the English heard in the celebration is that of the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, which alone is the approved wording. Psalms are numbered as the Lectionary numbers them, with the Vulgate number, which the Douay–Rheims and the Latin books use, in parentheses.

The first reading has already spread the table. “And the Lord of hosts shall make unto all people in this mountain, a feast of fat things, a feast of wine, of fat things full of marrow, of wine purified from the lees.” On the same mountain the Lord destroys the bond that held the peoples and the web over the nations; “He shall cast death down headlong for ever: and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from every face” (Is 25:6–8). The psalm sings of the shepherd who prepares a table before his own in the face of their enemies, anoints the head and fills the cup, and whose mercy follows them until they dwell in the house of the Lord. Paul, closing his letter to the Philippians, writes that he knows “both to be full and to be hungry: both to abound and to suffer need” and that he can “do all things in him who strengtheneth me” (Phil 4:12–13). Before the Gospel the assembly prays, in a verse made from Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians, to know the hope of its calling.

The Missal’s own texts, which serve this Sunday in all three years of the Lectionary’s cycle, frame the readings with a psalm verse, three prayers and a pair of Communion antiphons. The Entrance Antiphon asks who could stand if the Lord marked iniquities, and answers that with him is propitiation. The Collect asks that his grace go before and follow the assembly and keep it intent on good works. The Prayer over the Offerings asks that through these acts of devout worship the faithful pass over to heavenly glory, and the Prayer after Communion that those fed with the Body and Blood of Christ be made partakers of the divine nature. At Communion the Missal offers either the psalm verse on the rich who hungered while those who seek the Lord lack no good thing, or John’s promise that when the Lord appears his own will be like him, because they will see him as he is.

The *Ordo lectionum Missae* marks what it singles out in each reading by the title it sets over it. Over the first reading stands *Faciet Dominus convivium, et absterget lacrimam ab omni facie*, drawn from Isaiah 25:6 and 8; over the Gospel, *Quoscumque inveneritis, vocate ad nuptias*, from Matthew 22:9, a verse that both forms of the Gospel contain; over the second reading, *Omnia possum in eo, qui me confortat*, from Philippians 4:13. The introduction to the *Ordo* explains that the relation between the readings of one Mass is shown by the choice of these titles, and that in Ordinary Time the Old Testament reading is chosen for its relation to the Gospel while the Apostle and the Gospel are each read in their own course (*Praenotanda* 105–107). The two titles that belong together set a feast the Lord makes, at which the tear is wiped from every face, beside a wedding to which whoever is found is called. The letter to the Philippians is read over four Sundays of Year A, and this is the last of them.

The Sunday's question is therefore an old one: who comes to God's feast, and what keeps a person from it? The Fathers and Doctors who expounded these passages answer along three lines, and each line, carried through every text of the Mass, yields an interpretation of the whole. The first asks what the feast is and to whom it is given, and reads the king's feast as the wedding the Father makes for his Son. For Gregory the Great that wedding is the Church joined to the Son through the Incarnation; for Jerome, Christ's wedding with a Church gathered from Jews and gentiles; for Irenaeus, a marriage the one Father prepared from the beginning and filled from all nations; for Hilary of Poitiers, the sacrament of the eternal glory to be received at the resurrection. Jerome and Thomas Aquinas read Isaiah's banquet as a feast of Christ for the nations, and Aquinas himself sets it beside the king's dinner. This interpretation must carry the parable's hardest verse, the burnt city, which several of these Fathers read of a people. The second asks why a guest gathered from the roads by the king's own servants is cast out, and what the garment is that he lacked. Augustine and Gregory answer charity, which neither baptism nor faith guarantees; Aquinas counts charity among the ways of putting on Christ; Chrysostom, Irenaeus and Jerome answer in other terms; Hilary of Poitiers gives an answer that stands against Augustine's and Gregory's. They agree that the garment is required of those the call has gathered, and must be kept. The third asks why the invited would not come. It finds the reason in the farm and the merchandise, which Gregory, Hilary and Aquinas read as earthly labour, worldly ambition and the love of gain, and of which Chrysostom says that even necessary things must be set below the spiritual; and it reads the second reading and the first Communion antiphon, by the editor's own joining, as the freedom the invited lacked. None of the witnesses behind these interpretations expounds this Mass as a whole. Each interpretation gives every appointed element a place and closes with four senses of its own, literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical.

The appointed elements at a glance

Element	Text and reference	What it says
Entrance Antiphon	<i>Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine</i> ; Ps 130 (129):3–4, an adaptation	If the Lord kept account of iniquities, no one could stand; but with him there is propitiation. The antiphon closes by naming him the God of Israel.
Collect	<i>Tua nos, quaesumus, Domine, gratia</i>	A petition that the Lord's grace always go before and follow the assembly, and keep it constantly intent on good works.
First Reading	Is 25:6–10a	On this mountain the Lord of hosts makes a feast of fat things and refined wine for all peoples, destroys the bond over the nations, casts death down for ever and wipes away tears; in that day his people say, Lo, this is our God.
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 23 (22):1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; response from v. 6cd	The Lord shepherds the singer, who will want nothing: pasture and water, the paths of justice, no fear in the shadow of death; a table prepared, the head anointed, the cup; mercy following, and a dwelling in the house of the Lord.
Second Reading	Phil 4:12–14, 19–20; vv. 15–18 are not read	Paul knows how to be brought low and to abound, to be full and to be hungry, and can do all things in him who strengthens him; the Philippians did well to share his tribulation; God's supplying of all their want from his riches in glory in Christ Jesus; a doxology.
Alleluia verse	cf. Eph 1:17–18, recast in the first person plural	A prayer that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our heart, that we may know the hope of our calling.
Gospel, longer form	Mt 22:1–14	The king's wedding for his son: the invited refuse and kill the servants, the king's armies burn their city, the hall is filled from the roads with bad and good, a guest without a wedding garment is cast out; many are called, few chosen.
Gospel, shorter form	Mt 22:1–10	The same parable as far as the filling of the hall, without the guest and the closing saying.

Element	Text and reference	What it says
Prayer over the Offerings	<i>Suscipe, Domine, fidelium preces</i>	The faithful's prayers are offered with the sacrificial gifts, that through these acts of devout worship they may pass over to heavenly glory.
Communion Antiphon, first option	<i>Divites egerunt et esurierunt;</i> cf. Ps 34 (33):11	The rich have known want and hunger, but those who seek the Lord will lack no good thing.
Communion Antiphon, second option	<i>Cum apparuerit Dominus;</i> 1 Jn 3:2, an adaptation	When the Lord appears, those who are his will be like him, because they will see him as he is.
Prayer after Communion	<i>Maiestatem tuam, Domine, suppliciter deprecamur</i>	Addressed to the divine majesty: as he feeds the assembly with the Body and Blood of Christ, so may he make them partakers of the divine nature.

The two forms of the Gospel are alternatives, and so are the two Communion antiphons: the Missal prints the second under *Vel*, and one of them is used. Every other element is required. The formulary has no Sequence, Offertory antiphon, proper Preface, prayer over the people or solemn blessing, and the Lectionary gives no shorter form of the other readings. A claim below that rests on Matthew 22:11–14 does not hold where the shorter form of the Gospel is read, and a claim that rests on one Communion antiphon holds only where that antiphon is chosen; each such claim says so.

The Appointed Texts

The Missal's texts for this Sunday are those of *Dominica XXVIII "per annum"* in the *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia (2002), which the *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, renders for the dioceses of the United States; the readings, psalm and Alleluia verse are those of no. 142 of the *Lectionary for Mass*, which follows the *Ordo lectionum Missae* of 1981. The Latin of the Missal, the approved English of the Missal and the approved English of the Lectionary are all under copyright, and none of them is reproduced here. Each biblical element is given at its canonical verses in the Douay–Rheims version as revised by Bishop Challoner, which translates the Clementine Vulgate and numbers the psalms as the Vulgate does. That English is a study text and is not the wording proclaimed at Mass. Words printed in brackets and italics belong to the verse but not to the appointed text. Each oration is identified by the opening words of its Latin and described, and no English is supplied for it; the three antiphons and the Alleluia verse adapt Scripture, and the verses they draw on are printed beside them as their sources and not as their words.

Entrance Antiphon

Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine. The Missal cites Psalm 129:3–4 in the Vulgate numbering, which is Psalm 130:3–4 in the Hebrew, and prints no *Cf.*

A question put to the Lord: if he were to keep account of iniquities, who could stand? The answer follows, that with him there is propitiation, and the antiphon closes by addressing him as the God of Israel. It takes v. 3 of the psalm and the first clause of v. 4, and then departs from the psalm: it leaves out the rest of v. 4, on waiting for the Lord by reason of his law, and ends with the vocative *Deus Israel*, which stands neither in the Clementine Vulgate's Psalm 129 nor in the *Nova Vulgata*'s. Within the psalm Israel is named only in vv. 6 and 8, in the third person. The antiphon is therefore an adaptation, though it carries no *Cf.*; the Latin source of its ending has not been established. No English is printed for the antiphon or its closing words. The verses it draws on follow.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), PS 129:3–4, THE ANTIPHON’S SOURCE

³If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities: Lord, who shall stand it. ⁴For with thee there is merciful forgiveness[: *and by reason of thy law, I have waited for thee, O Lord. My soul hath relied on his word.*]

“Merciful forgiveness” is the Douay–Rheims rendering of *propitiatio*.

Collect

Tua nos, quaesumus, Domine, gratia. Long conclusion.

A petition about grace and action: that the Lord’s grace always go before the assembly and follow it (*semper et praeveniat et sequatur*), and keep it constantly intent on good works (*bonis operibus iugiter praestet esse intentos*). No English is printed.

First Reading

Isaiah 25:6–10a. Lectionary no. 142. The reading ends with the first clause of v. 10; the rest of the verse, on Moab, is not read.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), IS 25:6–10

⁶And the Lord of hosts shall make unto all people in this mountain, a feast of fat things, a feast of wine, of fat things full of marrow, of wine purified from the lees. ⁷And he shall destroy in this mountain the face of the bond with which all people were tied, and the web that he began over all nations. ⁸He shall cast death down headlong for ever: and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from every face, and the reproach of his people he shall take away from off the whole earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. ⁹And they shall say in that day: Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have patiently waited for him, we shall rejoice and be joyful in his salvation. ¹⁰For the hand of the Lord shall rest in this mountain[: *and Moab shall be trodden down under him, as straw is broken in pieces with the wain*].

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 23 (22):1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; the response is taken from v. 6cd. Lectionary no. 142.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), PS 22:6, SECOND HALF, AS THE RESPONSE

[*And thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life.*] And that I may dwell in the house of the Lord unto length of days.

The Latin *Ordo* prints the response from the second half of v. 6, the dwelling in the house of the Lord for length of days. The response on the bishops’ conference’s page of readings for the day gives the same locator, but its wording joins the dwelling in the Lord’s house to the days of one’s life, which in the Latin and in the Douay–Rheims belong to the first half of the verse. Whether the printed Lectionary reads the same was not established, and nothing below rests on the wording of the response.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), PS 22:1–6

¹[*A psalm for David.*] The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want nothing. ²He hath set me in a place of pasture. He hath brought me up, on the water of refreshment: ³He hath converted my soul.

He hath led me on the paths of justice, for his own name's sake. ⁴For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me.

⁵Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that afflict me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil; and my chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly is it!

⁶And thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life. And that I may dwell in the house of the Lord unto length of days.

The strophes divide within v. 3, between the converting of the soul and the leading in the paths of justice. The title, which the Vulgate numbers within v. 1, is not read. Where the Latin says that the Lord rules the singer, the Hebrew says that he shepherds him.

Second Reading

Philippians 4:12–14, 19–20. Lectionary no. 142. Verses 15–18 are left out between the two parts of the reading.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), PHIL 4:12–14, 19–20

¹²I know both how to be brought low, and I know how to abound (every where and in all things I am instructed): both to be full and to be hungry: both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me. ¹⁴Nevertheless, you have done well in communicating to my tribulation.

[Verses 15–18 are not read.]

¹⁹And may my God supply all your want, according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰Now to God and our Father be glory, world without end. Amen.

In v. 19 the Clementine Vulgate, which the Douay–Rheims follows, has a wish, *impleat omne desiderium vestrum*; the *Nova Vulgata*, the Latin of the *Ordo*, has a promise, *implebit*, and the Lectionary's English, as the bishops' conference's page prints it, is likewise a promise. Where an argument below turns on the mood of the verb or on the word *desiderium*, it says which text it follows.

Alleluia Verse

Cf. Ephesians 1:17–18. Lectionary no. 142.

The verse makes Paul's prayer for his readers the assembly's own prayer. It names the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as the one who is to enlighten the eyes of the heart, leaves out the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and puts the whole in the first person plural, so that it ends on the hope of *our* calling (*spes vocationis nostrae*) where Paul wrote of the hope of *his* calling. No English is printed for the verse. The verses it adapts follow.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), EPH 1:17–18, THE VERSE'S SOURCE

¹⁷That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, [*may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation, in the knowledge of him.*] ¹⁸The eyes of your heart enlightened that you may know what the hope is of his calling [*and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*]

Gospel, Longer Form

Matthew 22:1–14. Lectionary no. 142, the longer form. The Latin *Ordo* opens the reading with an incipit naming the chief priests and elders of the people, whom the narrative introduces at 21:23; the incipit is not printed here as Scripture.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), MT 22:1–14

¹And Jesus answering, spoke again in parables to them, saying: ²The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son. ³And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come ye to the marriage. ⁵But they neglected and went their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise. ⁶And the rest laid hands on his servants and, having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. ⁷But when the king had heard of it, he was angry: and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city. ⁸Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. ⁹Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. ¹⁰And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests. ¹¹And the king went in to see the guests: and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. ¹²And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. ¹³Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.

Gospel, Shorter Form

Matthew 22:1–10. Lectionary no. 142, the shorter form, with the same incipit.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), MT 22:1–10

¹And Jesus answering, spoke again in parables to them, saying: ²The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son. ³And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come ye to the marriage. ⁵But they neglected and went their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise. ⁶And the rest laid hands on his servants and, having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. ⁷But when the king had heard of it, he was angry: and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city. ⁸Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. ⁹Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. ¹⁰And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests.

The shorter form ends with the hall filled. It does not contain the guest without a wedding garment or the saying “many are called, but few are chosen”.

Prayer over the Offerings

Suscipe, Domine, fidelium preces. Short conclusion.

The Lord is asked to receive the prayers of the faithful together with the sacrificial offerings, so that through these acts of devout worship (*per haec piae devotionis officia*) they may pass over to heavenly glory (*ad caelestem gloriam*). No English is printed.

Communion Antiphon, First Option

Divites eguerunt et esurierunt. The Missal cites *Cf.* Psalm 33:11 in the Vulgate numbering, which is Psalm 34:11 in the Hebrew count that numbers the title, and 34:10 in English Bibles that do not.

The rich have known want and hunger, but those who seek the Lord will lack no good thing. The antiphon reads *quaerentes*, those who seek, where the Clementine Vulgate has *inquirentes* and the *Nova Vulgata* has *inquirentes* with another verb for lacking; the rest follows the Clementine. The Hebrew text, as the King James Version translates it, has young lions where the Latin and the Douay–Rheims have the rich, so that what is said of the rich here belongs to the Latin and Greek tradition the Missal cites. No English is printed for the antiphon.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), PS 33:11, THE ANTIPHON’S SOURCE

The rich have wanted, and have suffered hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good.

Communion Antiphon, Second Option

Cum apparuerit Dominus. 1 John 3:2, printed under *Vel* and without *Cf.*

When the Lord appears, those who are his will be like him, because they will see him as he is. The antiphon takes only the second half of the verse, leaves out its opening words “We know that”, and supplies a subject, *Dominus*, which neither the Clementine nor the *Nova Vulgata* expresses. It is therefore an adaptation, though it carries no *Cf.* No English is printed for the antiphon. The verse it adapts follows.

DOUAY–RHEIMS (CHALLONER), 1 JN 3:2, THE ANTIPHON’S SOURCE

[*Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God: and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that*] when he shall appear we shall be like to him: because we shall see him as he is.

Prayer after Communion

Maiestatem tuam, Domine, suppliciter deprecamur. Short conclusion.

The prayer is addressed to the divine majesty: as he feeds the assembly with the Body and Blood of Christ, so may he make them partakers of the divine nature. The Missal prints no source for it; its closing words, *divinae naturae . . . consortes*, are those of 2 Peter 1:4 in the Clementine Vulgate, “that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature”. No English is printed for the prayer.

Each Element in Its Setting

The texts of this Mass come from two books with separate histories. The antiphons and orations belong to the Missal’s Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time and are prayed with the readings of all three years; the readings, psalm and acclamation belong to the Lectionary’s Year A. Each element has its own literary setting and its own textual facts, and the witnesses who expounded it read it in that setting. What follows

gives each element its context and the witnesses' reading of it; the interpretations that follow this section carry the arguments that join the elements.

The question from the depths

The Entrance Antiphon comes from Psalm 129 (Hebrew 130), one of the songs of ascents, which the Vulgate heads *Canticum graduum* and the Douay–Rheims “A gradual canticle”; the title names no author. The singer cries “out of the depths” (v. 1), asks who could stand if the Lord marked iniquities (v. 3), confesses that with him there is propitiation and that he has waited for him by reason of his law (v. 4), and then turns to the people: let Israel hope in the Lord, “Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with him plentiful redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (vv. 7–8). The antiphon keeps the question and the first half of its answer and closes with a vocative to the God of Israel, so that the name the psalm speaks of at its end is spoken to at the antiphon's end.

Augustine hears the cry from the depths as the cry of every sinner, for “this mortal life is our deep”. Those who prosper in their sins are deepest of all: “they are the more plunged in the deep, in proportion as they seem to be more happy; for a deceitful happiness is itself a greater unhappiness.” The question of v. 3 is asked by one who saw “that a clean heart trusting in its own righteousness could not be found”. The answer turns on one word: “And what is this propitiation, except sacrifice? And what is sacrifice, save that which hath been offered for us? The pouring forth of innocent blood blotted out all the sins of the guilty” (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 129.1–3). Robert Bellarmine reads the verb as a creditor's: to “observe” iniquities is “to note down, to record, to make an entry, as a creditor would against a debtor”. No one could pass that reckoning, because “we, without his grace, are not only unable to offer condign satisfaction, but we are even incapable of seeing the enormity of the offence”; the sinner “can transgress, but cannot make satisfaction for the transgression, unless he be mercifully helped thereto”. On v. 4 he takes the law by reason of which the psalmist waits to be a law God laid on himself, “to show no mercy to the impenitent, but to receive the penitent” (*Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Ps 129:3–5).

Grace that goes before and follows

The Collect is short and exact. It asks that the Lord's grace *semper et praeveniat et sequatur*, always go before and follow, and that it keep the assembly *bonis operibus iugiter . . . intentos*, constantly intent on good works. The prayer is old. Its Latin stands in the Gregorian sacramentary as H. A. Wilson edited it in 1915, once among the prayers for vespers and matins, where one manuscript has the Missal's order of words (p. 135), and again among the Sunday prayers of the season after Pentecost (p. 174).

No Father comments on this prayer, but its two verbs have a precise theological history. Thomas Aquinas asks whether grace is fittingly divided into prevenient and subsequent, and answers from two psalm verses, “his mercy shall go before me” and “his mercy shall follow me”, the second of them the sixth verse of this Sunday's psalm. Grace has five effects, he says: it heals the soul, makes it will the good, makes it do the good, makes it persevere, and brings it to glory; and each effect is prevenient with respect to the next and subsequent with respect to the one before. He closes with a sentence of Augustine's that he quotes: *praevenit ut vocemur, subsequitur ut glorificemur*, grace goes before that we may be called and follows that we may be glorified (*Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 111, a. 3). He does not cite the Collect. Two commentators on the Mass speak of the prayer itself. Lucien Fromage, continuing Prosper Guéranger's *Liturgical Year*, writes that “unless grace prevent, that is, anticipate, us, we cannot have so much as the thought of doing what is holy; and again, unless it follow up the inspirations it has given us, and lead them to a happy termination, we shall never be able to pass from the simple thought to the act of any virtue whatsoever” (vol. 11, p. 357). Blessed Ildefonso Schuster explains that “Grace precedes the good actions of our free will”, that “the grace which has moved the will to the act of volition accompanies, so to speak, this act and

wholly pervades it”, and that “This truth of our holy Faith must make us very humble in the sight of God” (*The Sacramentary*, vol. 3, p. 142).

A feast on the mountain

The first reading belongs to the part of Isaiah that ends the oracles against the nations with a vision of the whole earth judged and the Lord reigning. Chapter 24 closes with “the Lord of hosts” reigning “in mount Sion, and in Jerusalem” and glorified before his ancients (24:23). Chapter 25 opens with a song of thanks to God, who has reduced “the strong city to ruin” and has been “a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress” (25:2, 4). The appointed verses follow with “And”: on “this mountain” the Lord makes the feast for all people, destroys the bond and the web over the nations, casts death down for ever, wipes away tears and takes away his people’s reproach; “in that day” they say, “Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him”; for the hand of the Lord rests on this mountain (25:6–10a). The rest of v. 10 and vv. 11–12, on Moab trodden down, lie outside the reading.

The Latin forms differ in ways that matter to the reception. The *Ordo*’s title, *absterget lacrimam*, follows the *Nova Vulgata*, where the Clementine Vulgate reads *auferet*; the *Nova Vulgata* speaks in v. 6 of pure and refined wine where the Clementine speaks of the vintage. Both read in v. 8 *Praecipitabit mortem in sempiternum*, and the Douay–Rheims follows them: “He shall cast death down headlong for ever.” Paul quotes the same verse in another form, “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor 15:54). Jerome, expounding the chapter, sets the Septuagint beside the Vulgate, and says of the Greek translators’ addition, *Trade omnia haec gentibus*, “give all these to the nations”, that they gave *non Scripturae verba, sed suum sensum*, not the words of Scripture but their own sense of them (*Commentarii in Isaiam* VIII, PL 24, col. 300). No Father cited here read the Lectionary’s Latin, and none of their lemmas is the Lectionary’s text.

Jerome reads the banquet as the feast the Lord makes after the Passion for all the nations on Mount Sion, ending when death is swallowed up and Christ’s kingdom comes; his sentence, and the contrast it draws, is given in full under the first interpretation. On v. 9 he gives the waiting a precise content: *Ecce Deus noster iste, quem increduli hominem tantum putabant; et expectavimus eum, hoc est, verbis eius credidimus, quia sua promissa complebit, et salvabit nos*: this is our God, whom unbelievers thought only a man; and we waited for him, that is, we believed his words, because he will fulfil his promises and save us (cols. 300–301). Thomas Aquinas reads the chapter as thanksgiving, and vv. 6–10 as the exaltation of the good. He is the one witness cited here who joins this reading to the Gospel: the feast is made *in monte hoc, quia ibi Christus passus est, unde nobis omnia bona provenerunt; vel quia ibi iudicabit, ut dicitur Matth. 22: Ecce prandium meum paravi*, on this mountain because Christ suffered there, from which all good things have come to us, or because he will judge there, as Matthew 22 says, “Behold, I have prepared my dinner” (*Expositio super Isaiam* c. 25, Parma, pp. 501–502). He reads the casting down of death with 1 Corinthians 15:54 and Hosea 13:14 and the wiping of tears with Apocalypse 21:4, and he notes that some referred the passage to the judgment shown in the death of Holofernes. The third *Mystagogical Catechesis*, transmitted under the name of Cyril of Jerusalem, quotes the verse in its Septuagint form to the newly anointed: “on this mountain shall the Lord make unto all nations a feast; they shall drink wine, they shall drink gladness, they shall anoint themselves with ointment”; the mountain, it says, is the Church (3.7).

The shepherd’s table

The psalm is the twenty-second in the Vulgate’s count, headed *Psalmus David*, “A psalm for David”. The Latin says that the Lord “ruleth” the singer, where the Hebrew says that he shepherds him; the images that follow are a shepherd’s, pasture and water, the right paths, the rod and staff in the shadow of death, and then a host’s, a table prepared in the sight of enemies, the head anointed, the cup filled, and mercy

following the guest until he dwells in the house of the Lord. The response is taken from the second half of the last verse.

Augustine hears the whole psalm as the Church speaking to Christ: “The Lord Jesus Christ is my Shepherd, ‘and I shall lack nothing.’” The water of refreshment is baptism; the paths of justice are “the narrow ways, wherein few walk”; the shadow of death is “this life”. The table is prepared “that I should no more be fed as a babe with milk, but being older should take meat”; the oil is spiritual joy and the cup is “yielding forgetfulness of former vain delights”. The last verse reaches past this life: “Thy mercy shall follow me not here only, but also that I may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 22.1–6). Aquinas, in his commentary on the Psalter, says that the psalm can signify the people’s return from Babylon and signifies Christ’s return from the world to heaven, and he hears it spoken *in persona Ecclesiae* of Christ the shepherd. “I shall want nothing” is said of what is necessary for salvation, and of the future: *in futuro omnem sufficientiam habebimus, quia nihil deerit nobis, quoniam habebimus Deum*, in the future we shall have every sufficiency, because nothing will be lacking to us, since we shall have God. The table is the teaching of Scripture, *vel mensam sacramentalem, scilicet altaris*: the table of the altar, for the table is threefold, of the old law, of the New Testament, and *in patria*, in the homeland. The cup is the gift of divine love that inebriates, or the blood of Christ; and the house of the Lord is the Church *per gratiam* and heaven *per gloriam* (*Postilla super Psalmos* 22). Robert Bellarmine finds the sheep’s pasture in “the knowledge of God, his sacraments, especially the Eucharist”; the table in the presence of enemies means that “God provides great consolations to meet great tribulations”, pictured “as if we were enjoying a feast”; and the mercy that follows is “the last good, that brings to the supreme good” (*Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Ps 22:1–6). The fourth *Mystagogical Catechesis* calls the table “that mystical and spiritual Table, which God hath prepared for us” and the cup the one which Jesus took in his hands, saying “This is My blood” (4.7).

Content in want and in plenty

The second reading is the last of four Sundays on which Year A reads Philippians, and it comes from the letter’s close. Paul has thanked the Philippians for their renewed care for him (4:10) and said that he has “learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content therewith” (4:11). The appointed verses give the content of that learning and its source: to be brought low and to abound, to be full and to be hungry, and the strength of the one who strengthens him; and they commend the Philippians for sharing his tribulation. The verses left out recall that they alone gave to him from the beginning of the Gospel, that he seeks “not the gift” but “the fruit”, and that he is filled by what Epaphroditus brought, “an odour of sweetness, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” (4:15–18). The reading resumes with God’s supplying of all their want and closes with the doxology. The *Ordo*’s title for the reading is the verse *Omnia possum in eo, qui me confortat*.

John Chrysostom and Thomas Aquinas both read Paul’s contentment as a virtue that has to be learned and is needed as much in plenty as in want, and both read its strength as Christ’s; their words are given under the third interpretation. On v. 19 the two read differently because they read different texts. Chrysostom’s text is a blessing: “Behold how he invokes blessings upon them, as poor men do”; and he reports that copies read “every need”, “every grace” or “every joy” (*Homilies on Philippians* 15). Aquinas expounds the Vulgate’s *impleat omne desiderium*: first as God’s return to the givers who had filled Paul’s need, and then of desire filled in glory (*Super Philippenses* c. 4, lect. 2, Dessain, p. 403). The third *Mystagogical Catechesis* gives v. 13 to the newly anointed, who, having put on “the whole armour of the Holy Ghost”, are to stand against the adversary “saying, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (3.4).

The hope of our calling

The Alleluia verse turns Paul's prayer for the Ephesians into the assembly's prayer for itself. In the letter Paul, having heard of their faith and love, prays that the Father of glory give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, the eyes of their heart enlightened to know the hope of his calling, the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints and the greatness of his power toward those who believe (Eph 1:15–19). The verse keeps the enlightening and the hope and makes the calling "ours". John Chrysostom says that Paul wants them to understand "to what blessings they are called", and of the hope he says, "It is as yet, he means, hidden, but not so to the faithful." The power that brought them to believe is greater than the power that raises the dead: "to persuade souls, is a thing far more miraculous than to raise a dead body", because "He would thus have us become good of our own will"; and "there is need of grace in order that the understanding may perceive it" (*Homilies on Ephesians* 3). Aquinas reads the enlightened eyes as the gift of wisdom, given for the knowledge of God, *contra eos, qui habent oculos illuminatos tantum ad temporalia cognoscenda*, against those whose eyes are enlightened only to know temporal things, with Jeremiah's *non gloriatur dives in divitiis suis*, let not the rich man glory in his riches (Jer 9:23). The hope of the calling is *virtus spei, et de quanta re sit*, the virtue of hope and the greatness of the thing hoped for (*Super Ephesios* c. 1, lect. 6, Dessain, p. 272).

The king's wedding

The parable is the third that Jesus tells in the temple after the chief priests and the ancients of the people have asked by what authority he acts (Mt 21:23). The parable of the vineyard has just ended with the saying that the kingdom will be taken from its tenants and given to a nation yielding its fruits, and "the chief priests and Pharisees . . . knew that he spoke of them" and feared the crowds (21:43–46). Matthew continues, "And Jesus answering, spoke again in parables to them" (22:1). The parable that follows ends the series; after it the Pharisees take counsel how to ensnare him in his speech, and the question of tribute begins (22:15), the Gospel of the following Sunday. The *Ordo's* incipit names the chief priests and elders of the people as those addressed, the words of 21:23.

The story moves in three steps. The king's invitation is refused twice, the second time in spite of the word that "all things are ready"; some neglect it and go off to farm and merchandise, the rest kill the servants, and the king's armies destroy the murderers and burn their city (22:2–7). The invitation then goes out to the roads: the Latin has *ad exitus viarum*, where the roads go out, which the Douay–Rheims renders "into the highways", and the servants gather "both bad and good" (22:8–10). In the longer form the king comes in, finds a guest without a wedding garment, and has him bound and cast out, and the saying on the called and the chosen closes the parable (22:11–14). The shorter form ends with the hall full. Under no. 80 of the *Praenotanda* the choice between the forms is pastoral, made for the hearers' capacity to listen with profit; nothing in the books makes either the proper one.

Jerome notices how the parable names the host: when he invites and does works of clemency he is *homini regi*, a man who is king, but when he comes to vengeance *homo siletur, et rex tantum dicitur*, the man is left unsaid and he is called king alone (*Commentarii in Matthaeum* III, PL 26, col. 160). Aquinas, giving Origen's reason, explains the same phrase differently: he is called a man who is king because he now rules us in a human way, *Sed cum videbitur sicuti est, tunc erit Rex, quia tunc secundum se reget*, but when he is seen as he is, then he will be King, because then he will rule according to himself (*Super Matthaeum* c. 22, Venice, p. 279). Gregory the Great and Aquinas both ask whether Luke's great supper (Lk 14:16–24) is the same parable, and both hold that it is another: for Gregory, Matthew's wedding signifies the present Church, where some enter who will go out again, and Luke's supper the eternal and last banquet, which no one who has entered will leave (*Homiliae in Evangelia* 38.1). Gregory yields the point, *salva fide*, to anyone who holds the two to be one.

The text itself is stable. The editions reported in the apparatus of the SBL Greek New Testament differ only in small ways: at v. 7 the Byzantine text, with the Clementine Vulgate and the Douay–Rheims, has the king hear before he is angry, which the critical texts and the *Nova Vulgata* do not; at v. 10 one edition reads the bridal hall for the wedding; at v. 13 the Byzantine text adds “take him away”. None of these changes who is invited, who refuses, who is gathered or why the guest is cast out. Chrysostom’s English text says that the invited “made light of it” where the Vulgate says *neglexerunt*.

What the parable’s details mean is the matter of the three interpretations that follow. Two disputes among the Fathers run through them and are stated here once. The first is where the wedding stands: Gregory places it in the present Church, Hilary of Poitiers makes it the sacrament of eternal glory to be received at the resurrection, Augustine speaks of two feasts, and Aquinas gives both, following Gregory for the parable. The second is the burnt city of v. 7: John Chrysostom reads it of the destruction of Jerusalem under Vespasian and Titus; Jerome and Aquinas give that reading and another; Gregory and Hilary read the armies as angels and the fire as the eternal punishment of the persecutors. Both disputes are developed under the first interpretation, and a third, on what the wedding garment is, under the second.

Gifts offered for glory

The Prayer over the Offerings asks the Lord to receive the faithful’s prayers together with the sacrificial offerings, so that through these acts of devout worship they may pass over to heavenly glory. Its body stands word for word in Wilson’s edition of the Gregorian sacramentary as the prayer over the offerings for the station at Saint Paul’s on the Tuesday of Easter week (p. 61), and again on a Sunday after the octave of Easter (p. 167). No commentary on the prayer was found; what the interpretations say of it is their own reading of its words, *per haec piae devotionis officia* and *ad caelestem gloriam*.

The rich who hungered

The first Communion antiphon comes from Psalm 33 (Hebrew 34), whose title in the Vulgate and the Douay–Rheims ties it to David’s changing his countenance before Achimelech, the episode the Douay–Rheims margin locates in 1 Kings 21. It is the psalm of “O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet” (v. 9). Verse 10 promises that there is no want to those who fear the Lord, and v. 11, the antiphon’s verse, sets against them the rich who “have wanted, and have suffered hunger”; v. 12 invites children to learn the fear of the Lord. The rich of the verse are the Latin and Greek reading; the Hebrew has young lions.

Augustine meets the obvious objection, that the wicked rich often die in plenty, and answers it by the spiritual sense, closing his comment by joining the verse himself to the Gospel of John: the bread the rich lack is the Living Bread (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 33, sections 13–14 of the English text). Robert Bellarmine gives the same “higher meaning”. Both are quoted under the third interpretation, where their reading carries most weight.

Seeing him as he is

The second Communion antiphon comes from the First Letter of John: “Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God” (3:1). The sons do not yet know what they shall be; they know that when he appears they shall be like him, because they shall see him as he is (3:2); and everyone who has this hope in him sanctifies himself, as he is holy (3:3). The antiphon gives only the knowledge and supplies its subject, *Dominus*, which the letter leaves unexpressed.

Augustine asks what it is to see him “as He is”. The form of the servant even the wicked will see at the judgment, but to see Christ in the form of God “is to the bad impossible”; it is a vision “surpassing all things: because from it are all things beautiful” (*Homilies on the First Epistle of John* 4.5). Aquinas makes the verse the authority for his article that the blessed see the essence of God (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 12,

a. 1), and he explains that “as” determines what is seen, not how fully it is seen: “we shall see Him to be as He is”, but one will see more perfectly than another (a. 6, ad 1). What makes the difference is charity: “he will have a fuller participation of the light of glory who has more charity; because where there is the greater charity, there is the more desire; and desire in a certain degree makes the one desiring apt and prepared to receive the object desired” (a. 6).

Fed, and made partakers

The Prayer after Communion asks the divine majesty that, as he feeds the assembly with the Body and Blood of Christ, he make them partakers of the divine nature. An older form of it stands in the July section of the Verona sacramentary, without the vocative *Domine* that the Missal adds; that witness was read only in a machine-read text of Feltoe's edition (1896). Its closing words are those of 2 Peter 1:4, where the promises given through the knowledge of him who called us are given “that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature: flying the corruption of that concupiscence which is in the world”. No commentary on the prayer was found, but the joining of its two halves has a witness. The fourth *Mystagogical Catechesis* tells the newly baptized that “by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ” they are made “of the same body and the same blood with Him”, and “thus it is that, according to the blessed Peter, we become partakers of the divine nature” (4.3). Aquinas, without reference to the prayer, calls grace itself *participatio divinae naturae* and derives the infused virtues from it (*Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 110, a. 3), and he says that God alone deifies, *communicando consortium divinae naturae*, by communicating a share in the divine nature (q. 112, a. 1).

The King's Feast for All Peoples: The Wedding of the Son and the Banquet on the Mountain

Read from its centre, the Sunday is about what God gives. A king makes a wedding for his son and will not let the hall stand empty; the Lord of hosts makes a feast on his mountain for all peoples and swallows up death there. The two titles the *Ordo* sets over these readings put them side by side. The witnesses speak each of his own passage. Gregory the Great reads the parable's wedding as the Church joined to the Son, and places it in the present Church; Hilary of Poitiers reads it as the sacrament of the glory to be received at the resurrection; Jerome reads Isaiah's banquet as the feast the Lord makes for the nations after the Passion; and Aquinas alone sets Isaiah's feast beside the king's dinner. This interpretation reads the two feasts as one gift: the wedding the Father makes for his Son, to which the call goes out to everyone the servants can find, spread now in the Church and completed in the resurrection. That reading of the whole is the editor's synthesis, which no witness cited holds as stated, and so is the joining of both readings to this Mass's psalm, prayers and Communion.

A king who made a marriage for his son

The parable's first sentence already raises the question the Fathers answer first. Who is the king, who is the son, and what is the wedding? Gregory the Great begins from the king: he is the one to whom the Psalmist says, *Deus iudicium tuum regi da, et iustitiam tuam filio regis*, give to the king thy judgment, O God, and thy justice to the king's son (Ps 71:2). Then he says when the wedding was made, and corrects himself as he says it. God the Father made the wedding for God his Son, he says first, *quando hunc in utero Virginis humanae naturae coniunxit*, when in the Virgin's womb he joined him to human nature. But a joining of that kind is ordinarily made of two persons, and he will not have his hearers think the person of the Redeemer made out of two: *absit hoc ab intellectibus nostris*. So he restates it: *Apertius ergo atque securius dici potest quia in hoc Pater regi Filio nuptias fecit, quo ei per incarnationis mysterium sanctam Ecclesiam sociavit*, it can be said more openly, then, and more safely, that the Father made the wedding for

the King his Son in this, that through the mystery of the Incarnation he joined the holy Church to him. The Virgin's womb was the bridegroom's chamber, out of which he came forth "as a bridegroom" (Ps 18:6). The servants sent twice are the prophets, who said that the Incarnation would come, and the apostles, who announced that it had come (*Homiliae in Evangelia* 38.3).

Jerome states the same identification in two sentences and adds who the Church is: *Rex iste qui fecit nuptias filio suo, Deus omnipotens est. Facit autem nuptias Domino nostro Iesu Christo et Ecclesiae, quae tam ex Iudaeis, quam ex gentibus, congregata est*: this king who made a wedding for his son is God almighty, and he makes the wedding for our Lord Jesus Christ and for the Church, which is gathered as much from the Jews as from the gentiles (*Commentarii in Matthaeum* III, PL 26, col. 159). Irenaeus reads the parable against teachers who divided the God who calls from the God who judges. The Lord shows by it, he says, "that there is one King and Lord, the Father of all", who "had from the beginning prepared the marriage for His Son", sent his servants to call the invited, and, when they would not come, "called together from all the highways, that is, from all nations, [guests] to the marriage feast of His Son". The same King "grants them the incorruptible banquet" (*Against Heresies* IV.36.5–6). For Irenaeus the point is the unity of the design: one Father prepares the wedding from the beginning, issues the first call and the second, and fills the hall.

John Chrysostom asks why the parable speaks of a marriage at all, and answers from what a wedding is: "That thou mightest learn God's tender care, His yearning towards us, the cheerfulness of the state of things, that there is nothing sorrowful there, nor sad, but all things are full of spiritual joy." He sets beside it Paul's "I have espoused you to one husband" and "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church", and he adds that the parable, coming after the vineyard and the slain son, speaks of a wedding after a death: "Hereby He proclaimed the resurrection also", for "even after the death, then is the marriage, then the bridegroom" (*Homilies on Matthew* 69.1). Hilary of Poitiers draws that last thread tightest. The wedding, he says, is *vitae coelestis et in resurrectione suscipiendae aeternae gloriae sacramentum*, the sacrament of the heavenly life and of the eternal glory to be received in the resurrection; and it is rightly made by the Father, *quia aeternitatis huius societas, et novi corporis desponsa coniunctio, iam perfecta habebatur in Christo*, because the fellowship of this eternity and the espoused union of the new body were already held perfect in Christ (*Commentarius in Matthaeum* 22.3, PL 9, col. 1042).

These witnesses agree that the king is the Father and the son is Christ, that the wedding is the Father's gift to the Son, and that the invitation goes out beyond those first invited. They do not say the same thing about the bride. Gregory names the Church, joined to the Son through the Incarnation; Jerome the Church of Jews and gentiles; Irenaeus speaks of the marriage of the Son and of the guests from all nations; Hilary speaks of the new body already united in Christ and of the glory it will receive.

"My dinner is prepared"

The second invitation describes the feast: the dinner is ready, the beeves and fatlings are killed, all things are ready (Mt 22:4). Chrysostom hears in it what the guests are being called to: "Unto labors, and toils, and sweat? Nay but unto pleasure. . . . See how complete His banquet, how great His munificence." Jerome reads the menu as a figure: *per metaphoram opes regiae describuntur, ut ex carnalibus intelligantur spiritualia; vel certe dogmatum magnitudo*, the king's riches are described by metaphor, so that spiritual things may be understood from bodily ones, or else the greatness of the doctrines (col. 159). Gregory reads the slain animals as people. The bulls are the fathers of the old covenant, who struck their enemies as with a horn; the fatlings are the fathers of the new, who *gratiam pinguedinis internae percipiunt*, receive the grace of an inner fatness, and are lifted by it to contemplation, as the Psalmist desired, "Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness" (Ps 62:6). That they are named as slain only at the second invitation he takes as God's way of adding examples to words when words are not heard: *Patrum praecedentium mortes aspicite, et remedia vitae vestrae cogitate*, look on the deaths of the fathers who went before, and think of the remedies for your own life (38.4). Hilary too reads the fatlings as spiritual men, fed *tamquam coelesti pane*, as if with heavenly bread (22.4, col. 1043).

The table is not only described; it is set. Gregory says to his own hearers, in the homily's application, *Nos sumus, fratres charissimi, qui in nuptiis Verbi discumbimus, qui iam fidem in Ecclesia habemus, qui Scripturae sacrae epulis pascimur, qui coniunctam Deo Ecclesiam esse gaudemus*: we are the ones, dearest brethren, who recline at the wedding of the Word, who already have faith in the Church, who are fed with the dishes of holy Scripture, who rejoice that the Church is joined to God (38.11). The feast is present, and he names its food as the Scriptures read in the assembly.

On this mountain, for all peoples

Isaiah's feast is the other half of the official correlation, and two witnesses read it of Christ. Jerome's sentence carries a contrast that is his own and not the prophet's: *Post passionem ergo Domini . . . faciet Dominus nequaquam populo Iudaeorum, sed omnibus gentibus in monte Sion pingue convivium*, after the Lord's Passion the Lord will make, not for the people of the Jews but for all nations, a rich feast on Mount Sion, so as to cast down and swallow up "the face of death" and of the bond by which all peoples were bound. He reads the swallowing of death with Paul, *iuxta Apostolum, absorbebitur mors in perpetuum*, and the wiping of tears as the moment *quando morte superata, Christi advenerit regnum*, when death is overcome and Christ's kingdom has come (*Commentarii in Isaiam* VIII, PL 24, col. 300). The verse he expounds says "unto all people", and the same oracle promises that the reproach of the Lord's own people will be taken away from the whole earth (Is 25:8); the exclusion in Jerome's sentence is his reading, which the last section of this interpretation weighs.

Thomas Aquinas makes the join between the two readings himself. The feast is made on this mountain *quia ibi Christus passus est, unde nobis omnia bona provenerunt; vel quia ibi iudicabit, ut dicitur Matth. 22: Ecce prandium meum paravi, tauri mei et altilia sunt occisa*: because Christ suffered there, from which all good things have come to us, or because he will judge there, as Matthew 22 says, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my bulls and fatlings are killed". In a note on the feast of fat things he then distinguishes three feasts. The first is *familiare militantis Ecclesiae*, the household feast of the Church on pilgrimage, for which he cites Paul's "as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come" (1 Cor 11:26) and this Sunday's psalm, *Impinguasti in oleo caput meum*. The second is *convivium privatum animae*, the private feast of the soul. The third is *convivium solemne caelestis curiae*, the solemn feast of the heavenly court, whose sweetness is given *ad satietatem*, to the full, with the psalm verse *Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua*, "I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear" (Ps 16:15) (*Expositio super Isaiam* c. 25, Parma, pp. 501–502). So Aquinas holds together the Gospel's dinner, Isaiah's mountain, the psalm's anointed head and the altar, and he does it as an exegete of Isaiah; it is the one documented joining of this Sunday's readings among the witnesses cited.

The psalm's table receives an analogous threefold reading in Aquinas's commentary on the Psalter, where the table is Scripture's teaching *vel mensam sacramentalem, scilicet altaris*, and the three tables are those of the old law, of the New Testament, and of the homeland (*Postilla super Psalmos* 22); the triad is not the Isaiah commentary's, though both end in the heavenly feast. Augustine reads the table as the solid food given to the grown, and the mercy that follows as leading "that I may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever"; Bellarmine finds the Eucharist in the pasture; the fourth *Mystagogical Catechesis* calls the table "that mystical and spiritual Table". That the feast is the altar's is the reading of Aquinas and the *Catechesis*; Isaiah and the psalmist do not say so, and the literal sense of both is a banquet God gives.

Now, and at the resurrection

Where does the feast stand? Here the witnesses differ in emphasis, and the difference is worth keeping. Gregory places the parable's wedding in the present Church. The mixture of the guests shows it: *per has regis nuptias praesens Ecclesia designatur, in qua cum bonis et mali conveniunt*, the present Church is signified by this king's wedding, in which the bad come together with the good (38.7); and Luke's supper,

from which no one is cast out, is for him the eternal and last banquet (38.1). Augustine speaks of two feasts: “there are two feasts of the Lord; one to which the good and evil come, the other to which the evil come not”; and he joins them in a single exhortation, “Be that feast which now is, received worthily, that we may attain to the other” (*Sermo* 90.1, 4). Hilary makes the wedding the sacrament of the glory to be received at the resurrection, already perfect in Christ. Aquinas gives four expositions of the wedding, among them the Word incarnate as bridegroom and the Church as bride (Eph 5:32) and the wedding *in communi resurrectione* . . . *quando mortale nostrum absorbebitur a vita*, in the common resurrection, when what is mortal in us will be swallowed up by life; but for the parable he follows Gregory: *secundum Gregorium, oportet exponere de praesentibus*, according to Gregory it must be expounded of present things (*Super Matthaeum* c. 22, Venice, p. 280). Chrysostom, as above, sees the resurrection proclaimed in the wedding after the death.

These are emphases and not contradictions. Gregory does not read the parable's wedding as the last banquet, and Hilary does not read it as the Church on earth. What joins the present feast to the last differs with the form of the Gospel. In both forms the link is the resurrection. Hilary's wedding is the glory to be received in the resurrection, already perfect in Christ, and Chrysostom hears the resurrection in a wedding made after a death. Isaiah's verse supplies the end of the line. Jerome reads its swallowing of death with Paul, and Aquinas reads the wedding of the resurrection in Paul's words from another letter (2 Cor 5:4), so that “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor 15:54), Isaiah's death cast down, and the mortal swallowed up by life meet in their pages. Where the longer form is read, a second link stands between the two feasts: every witness who comments on the king's coming in to see the guests (22:11) places it at the judgment, and the present feast becomes the anteroom of the last. Where the shorter form is read, the king does not come in, and this interpretation keeps the two feasts, the one spread now and the one completed in the resurrection, without the judgment between them.

The Missal's texts in this reading

The Missal's antiphons and prayers serve all three years of the Lectionary, and no witness cited connects them to these readings. In this interpretation they take their places along the line of the feast. The Entrance Antiphon asks who could stand if the Lord marked iniquities, and answers that with him there is propitiation. Augustine's reading of the word, given with the antiphon above, makes the propitiation the sacrifice offered for us, and so describes the door by which anyone enters the feast: not his own standing but the sacrifice already made. The Collect asks for grace that goes before and follows. In the sentence of Augustine that Aquinas quotes, grace goes before *ut vocemur*, that we may be called, and follows *ut glorificemur*, that we may be glorified; heard in this reading, the call is the king's invitation and the glory is the feast completed.

The second reading enters this interpretation through its last verses. In the Vulgate, which the Douay–Rheims follows, v. 19 is a wish that God fill all the Philippians' desire, *impleat omne desiderium*; the *Nova Vulgata* has the same *desiderium* with a promise, *implebit*. Aquinas, after reading the verse as God's return to the givers, reads it of glory: *Et hoc verum in gloria . . . quia ibi implebitur totum desiderium*, and this is true in glory, because there all desire will be filled, with the same psalm verse he gave to Isaiah's third feast, *Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua* (*Super Philippenses* c. 4, lect. 2, p. 403). Joined to the feast, the verse rests on the Latin *desiderium*, desire, which both Latin texts read and the Douay–Rheims renders “want”. The Alleluia verse prays to know the hope of our calling, and Chrysostom's comment on Paul's prayer, “It is as yet, he means, hidden, but not so to the faithful”, names the condition of those who have heard the invitation and have not yet seen the feast. The Prayer over the Offerings asks that through these acts of devout worship the faithful may pass to heavenly glory: in this reading, the passage from the feast now spread to the feast completed.

At Communion the Missal offers two antiphons, and this interpretation hears each differently. Where the first is chosen, the rich who hungered are, in Augustine's own joining of the verse to the Gospel of John,

those who lack the Living Bread; his words are quoted under the third interpretation. Where the second is chosen, “we shall see him as he is” answers the parable’s king in both forms of the Gospel. Aquinas’s sentence on the king of its second verse, *cum videbitur sicuti est, tunc erit Rex*, has the words of this verse, though he cites Paul’s “face to face” (1 Cor 13:12) for it; Augustine’s reading of the vision is given with the antiphon above. Where the longer form is also read, the antiphon answers as well the king’s coming in to see the guests (22:11): the guests see the King whose coming in is, for these witnesses, the judgment. The Prayer after Communion asks that those fed with the Body and Blood of Christ be made partakers of the divine nature. Heard in this interpretation, it asks that the wedding Gregory describes in his more careful formulation, the Church joined to the Son through the mystery of the Incarnation, be shared by those fed at the table; the attributed *Catechesis* joins the Body and Blood to Peter’s “partakers of the divine nature” (4.3), and Aquinas calls grace a participation of the divine nature. It is Gregory’s restated formulation that bears this reading; his first, of the Son joined to human nature in the Virgin’s womb, he corrected himself, as shown above.

Where this interpretation strains

The parable is grim where Isaiah is glad. Isaiah’s feast ends with tears wiped from every face; the parable’s ends, in the longer form, with weeping and gnashing of teeth, and in both forms it passes through the slaughter of the servants, the king’s anger, the armies and the burnt city (Mt 22:6–7). An interpretation that rejoices in the feast must carry that verse.

The Fathers read it in two ways. John Chrysostom says the parable foretells “the casting out of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles”, and reads the burning of the city as “the things that took place under Vespasian and Titus”, forty years after the Passion, “that He might show His long suffering” (*Homilies on Matthew* 69.1). Jerome gives two readings of the armies, avenging angels or the Romans under Vespasian and Titus (col. 160), and Aquinas likewise gives both, adding that God’s anger *non commotionem significat, sed vindictam*, signifies not agitation but just punishment (p. 281). Gregory and Hilary read the armies as angels and the burning as the eternal punishment of the persecutors: for Gregory *illorum non solum animae, sed et caro . . . aeterna gehennae flamma cruciatur*, not only their souls but their flesh is tormented by the eternal fire (38.5). Irenaeus, Hilary, Chrysostom, Jerome and Aquinas identify the first invited with Israel, Irenaeus as “the men of the former dispensation”; Aquinas heads the parable *de reprobatione Iudaeorum, et vocatione gentium*; and Jerome’s sentence on Isaiah sets the feast *nequaquam populo Iudaeorum*. Gregory identifies the refusers with the persecutors of the preachers and applies the parable to his own hearers.

These are the Fathers’ readings of a parable that Matthew says was spoken to the chief priests and the elders of the people (21:23) and that the chief priests and Pharisees knew was spoken of them (21:45). The Second Vatican Council, in *Nostra aetate* 4, governs how such readings are presented and applied, though it passes no judgment on any Father’s exegesis. It recalls with Paul that the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance (Rom 11:29; Latin, *cuius dona et vocatio sine paenitentia sunt*); it teaches that what happened in the Passion cannot be charged “against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today”, and that the Jews “should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures”. A parable about a call is the place where that bound bites hardest. Read under it, the identification of the first invited belongs to the Fathers who make it; the parable’s own hearers are those leaders in the temple; and the warning falls, as Gregory and Chrysostom themselves turn it, on the baptized. Gregory’s “We are the ones who recline at the wedding of the Word” and Chrysostom’s “Hear ye, as many as having partaken of the mysteries” (69.2) are addressed to Christians. Isaiah’s “all people” cannot be narrowed to “not this people” on the strength of Jerome’s phrase, which is his alone.

Two further limits stand. The Eucharistic reading of Isaiah’s feast and of the psalm’s table is the reception of Aquinas and of the attributed *Catechesis*; the literal sense of both is a banquet God gives on his mountain and in his house. And Gregory’s reading of the wedding as the present Church, which Aquinas follows,

limits how far the parable's wedding may be called the last banquet: the present feast and the final one are joined here by the resurrection, and in the longer form also by the judgment, not identified.

The four senses of this interpretation

Literal.

Isaiah promises a feast for all peoples on the Lord's mountain, where death is cast down and tears are wiped away. Jesus tells the chief priests and elders of a king whose wedding the invited refuse, and whose hall he fills with whomever his servants find on the roads.

Allegorical.

The king is the Father and the wedding is the Son's union with the Church through the mystery of the Incarnation (Gregory); the Church is gathered from Jews and gentiles alike (Jerome). Aquinas reads Isaiah's feast on the mountain of the Passion as the feast announced by "my dinner is prepared", and the psalm's table as the altar.

Moral.

Come to the feast now spread, and receive it worthily, that you may come to the other (Augustine). Where the first Communion antiphon is chosen: hunger for the Living Bread, not for what leaves the rich empty (Augustine).

Anagogical.

The wedding is completed in the resurrection (Hilary), when death is swallowed up and Christ's kingdom comes (Jerome, on Isaiah 25:8), and the King is seen as he is (Aquinas). Where the second Communion antiphon is chosen: we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Friend, How Camest Thou In? The Garment the Called Must Wear

Where the longer form of the Gospel is read, the parable does not end with the hall full. The king comes in to see the guests, finds one without a wedding garment, and asks him, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment?" The man is silent, and is bound and cast out, "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt 22:11–14). The difficulty is plain. The man did not force his way in: the king's own servants gathered him from the roads with everyone else, "both bad and good" (22:10). Why is he blamed for his clothes? This interpretation answers with what the Fathers who expound these verses share, each in his own words: the call is free and goes out to all, and the garment is required of those whom the call has gathered, is to be kept, and is answered for when the king comes in. Those who say where the garment comes from, Chrysostom, Augustine, Gregory and Hilary, say that it is given, as the call is. Irenaeus and Hilary state the freedom of the call; Chrysostom and Aquinas say why the called are nonetheless examined. What the garment is, they say differently. Augustine and Gregory name it charity, and Aquinas counts charity among the ways of putting on Christ; Chrysostom calls it life and practice, Irenaeus works of righteousness, Jerome the Lord's precepts and the works of the new man, and Hilary the glory of the Holy Spirit. The interpretation leaves that identification open and sets the answers side by side. The joins among them, and to the Collect and the rest of the Mass, are the editor's. The Gospel at the centre of this interpretation stands only in the longer form; what remains of it under the shorter form is said at the end.

Called without exception, and examined

The witnesses first state the freedom of the call. Irenaeus says that the one God “does indeed, through His infinite kindness, call the unworthy; but He examines those who are called”, whether they have on the garment fit for his Son’s marriage (*Against Heresies* IV.36.6). Hilary of Poitiers puts the call’s holiness and the guests’ failure in one sentence: *Vocatio quidem bonos efficere debuerat, quia sancta est, et ex optimo affectu invitantis profecta est: sed per vitium inemendatae voluntatis discrimen est vocatorum*, the calling ought to have made them good, because it is holy and came from the best affection of the one inviting; but through the fault of an unamended will there is a difference among the called (*Commentarius in Matthaeum* 22.6, PL 9, col. 1043). He also asks the reader’s question himself. Had the king laid down what the invited were to wear? He had ordered whoever was found to be invited, so how could all have been dressed alike? And if a fixed dress had been the custom at weddings, the servants could have kept the man out. His answer is that the fault was one only God could see: *idcirco hunc malum et indignum coetu nuptiali Deus solus invenit*, therefore God alone finds this man, evil and unworthy of the wedding company (22.7, col. 1044).

John Chrysostom gives the clearest account of how the call and the garment belong together. Having called the gentiles, the Lord “discourses unto them also concerning the judgment to be passed upon wicked actions”, so that no one should “put confidence in their faith alone”. “For the garment is life and practice. And yet the calling was of grace; wherefore then doth He take a strict account? Because although to be called and to be cleansed was of grace, yet, when called and clothed in clean garments, to continue keeping them so, this is of the diligence of them that are called” (*Homilies on Matthew* 69.2). In Chrysostom’s account, then, the guest received a clean garment with his call and did not keep it. Thomas Aquinas meets the objection directly: someone might say the king had occasion against the man, since he had called the bad as well as the good; but *noluit quod mali venirent nisi pararent se, et disponderent se ut essent boni*, he did not will that the bad should come unless they prepared themselves and disposed themselves to be good (*Super Matthaeum* c. 22, Venice, p. 282).

Charity: the answer of Augustine and Gregory

Augustine searches for the garment by elimination, twice. In one sermon he asks whether it is a sacrament: “Is it Baptism? Without Baptism it is true no one attaineth to God; but not every one that hath Baptism attaineth to Him. I cannot therefore understand Baptism, the Sacrament itself that is, to be ‘the wedding garment;’ for this garment I see in the good, I see in the bad.” Nor is it the altar, for many “eat and drink judgment to themselves”; nor fasting, nor running to church, nor miracles. “What is that ‘wedding garment’ then? This is the wedding garment: ‘Now the end of the commandment,’ says the Apostle, ‘is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned’” (1 Tim 1:5). Charity in the guest is something living: “Let charity be born in thee, if it be yet unborn, and if it be born, be it nourished, fostered, increased” (*Sermo* 90.5–6). In the other sermon he lists again what the good and the bad share, baptism, “the Sacraments of the Altar”, prophecy and faith, for “The devils also believe and tremble”, and finds the garment only in Paul’s “If I have not charity”. He takes up the objection of the excessive punishment: “For so small a fault, so great a punishment? For great it is. It is called a small fault not to have ‘the wedding garment;’ small, but only by those who do not understand.” And he says where the garment comes from: “Do not say; ‘we are too poor to have that garment.’ Clothe others, and ye are clothed yourselves. It is winter, clothe the naked. Christ is naked; and He will give you that ‘wedding garment’ whosoever have it not. . . . He knoweth how to clothe His naked ones” (*Sermo* 95.5, 7).

Gregory the Great reaches the same answer by the same route. If the garment were baptism or faith, he asks, who could have come into this wedding without them? *Quid ergo debemus intelligere nuptialem vestem, nisi charitatem?* What then are we to understand by the wedding garment, except charity? It is rightly called the wedding garment, he says, because the Creator himself had it *dum ad sociandae sibi Ecclesiae nuptias venit*, when he came to the wedding in which he joined the Church to himself; it was by love alone that the Only-begotten united the minds of the elect to himself. The believer has entered

the wedding, but has not come in the wedding garment, *si charitatis gratiam non custodit*, if he does not keep the grace of charity (*Homiliae in Evangelia* 38.9). The garment is woven, like any cloth, between two beams, and charity likewise holds in two commandments, the love of God and the love of neighbour (38.10); and the love of neighbour is proved by the love of enemies (38.11).

For Augustine and Gregory, then, the garment is not something the bad can have, and that is why it cannot be baptism or faith. Both say that it is given and must be kept: Augustine's Christ "will give you that 'wedding garment'", and Gregory's guest lacks it if he does not keep *charitatis gratiam*. On their answer the difficulty of the guest from the roads is met by what the garment is: the call gathered him, and charity was what he had not put on.

Other names for the garment, and a real disagreement

The other witnesses name the garment in their own terms. For Chrysostom it is "life and practice", the clean garment received with the call and kept by diligence. For Irenaeus, "we ought, after our calling, to be also adorned with works of righteousness, so that the Spirit of God may rest upon us; for this is the wedding garment"; he cites Paul's wish to be "clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up by immortality" (2 Cor 5:4). For Jerome it is the new man's clothing: *Vestis autem nuptialis, praecepta sunt Domini, et opera quae complentur ex lege et Evangelio, novique hominis efficiunt vestimentum*, the wedding garment is the Lord's commandments and the works that are done from the law and the Gospel and make the new man's clothing; the man cast out wears instead *veteris hominis exuvias*, the cast-off skin of the old man (*Commentarii in Matthaeum* III, PL 26, cols. 160–161). Aquinas gathers these into one: *Quae est ista vestis? Christus. Qui sumus Christi, Christum induamus*, what is this garment? Christ: we who are Christ's, let us put on Christ (Rom 13:14). Some put him on by the sacrament (Gal 3:27), some by charity and love (Col 3:14), some by remembering death, some by conforming their works to his; *Habere ergo vestem nuptialem est induere Christum per operationem bonam, per conversationem sanctam, per caritatem veram: et si unum deficiat, malum*, to have the wedding garment, then, is to put on Christ by good works, by holy living, by true charity, and if one is lacking, it is bad (p. 282).

Hilary of Poitiers gives an answer that stands against Augustine's and Gregory's. *Vestitus autem nuptialis est gloria Spiritus sancti, et candor habitus coelestis: qui bonae interrogationis confessione susceptus, usque in coetum regni coelorum immaculatus et integer reservetur*: the wedding garment is the glory of the Holy Spirit and the whiteness of the heavenly habit, which, received at the confession of the good questioning, is to be kept unstained and whole until the assembly of the kingdom of heaven (22.7, col. 1044). Hilary does not say baptism. But the phrase "the good questioning" recalls Peter's words on baptism, which the Clementine Vulgate gives as *conscientiae bonae interrogatio in Deum*, "the examination of a good conscience towards God" (1 Pet 3:21); read as an allusion to that verse, which is the editor's reading and not Hilary's statement, his garment is received at baptism and kept by the baptized. The *Procatechesis* of Cyril of Jerusalem uses the parable in the same setting: the man who came in "when he saw them all clad in white, . . . ought to have assumed a garment of the same kind himself", and Cyril tells his candidates for baptism, "Thou seest what happened to that man: make thine own condition safe" (3).

This disagreement is real and it matters. Augustine and Gregory say expressly that the garment is not baptism, because the bad are baptized; Hilary's garment, on the reading of his allusion given here, is the gift received at the baptismal confession and kept. Chrysostom's clean garment given with the call and kept by diligence stands between them, and Aquinas includes the sacrament among the ways of putting on Christ while insisting that charity and works must be there too. The witnesses agree on more than they dispute: all of them make the garment something required of those whom the call has already gathered and something to be kept, and all who comment on the king's coming in place it at the judgment. That is the claim this interpretation makes. On what the garment names they do not agree, and the interpretation does not decide between them. Charity, works, Christ put on and the Spirit's glory are each given as their

authors' answers, and Augustine's and Gregory's denial that the garment is baptism stands against Hilary on the reading of his phrase given above.

“Friend”, and the silence

The king's question begins with a word that the witnesses weigh. Jerome: *Amicum vocat, quod invitatus ad nuptias est*, he calls him friend because he was invited to the wedding (col. 161). Gregory: *Amice, et non amice; amice per fidem, sed non amice per operationem*, friend and not friend, friend by faith but not friend in deed (38.12). The man's silence is the end of all excuse: *in illa districtione ultimae increpationis omne argumentum cessat excusationis*, in the strictness of that last rebuke every argument of excuse falls silent, because the one who rebukes from outside is the witness of the conscience within (38.12). Aquinas: *non potest habere sufficientem rationem peccator quare vestem nuptialem contempsit*, the sinner can have no sufficient reason why he despised the wedding garment (p. 282).

Gregory at once tempers the scene. Whoever has this garment of virtue, but not yet perfectly, *ad pii regis ingressum desperare veniam non debet*, must not despair of pardon when the merciful king comes in, since the Psalmist says, “Thy eyes did see my imperfect being, and in thy book all shall be written” (Ps 138:16; 38.12). The king's coming in is the judgment. Jerome says he comes *ut in die iudicii visitare convivas, et discerneret merita singulorum*, in order on the day of judgment to visit the guests and discern the merits of each (col. 160). Aquinas says the king comes in when he exercises judgment, at the final judgment, and also at death and when tribulations press on the Church (p. 282). Gregory says that the king “is to enter” on the coming day of judgment, *futuro die iudicii rex intraturus est* (38.14).

Many are called

The witnesses who comment on the closing saying weigh how few the chosen are, and they reach that judgement from different places. Gregory passes to it from the guest cast out: *repulso uno, in quo videlicet omne malorum corpus exprimitur*, the one rejected, in whom the whole body of the wicked is expressed, is followed at once by the general sentence (38.14). Augustine makes the same move and states the proportion: “Leave alone the few, cast out the many. It is true, that man was but one. Yet undoubtedly that one not only was many, but those many in numbers far surpassed the number of the good. For the good are many also; but in comparison of the bad, they are few.” He says it twice, “The same persons considered in themselves are many, in comparison with the bad are few”, and says what the saying shows, “who in this present feast are accounted to be such, as to be brought to that other feast, where no bad men shall come” (*Sermo* 90.4). At the feast now spread, then, the bad far outnumber the good, and the good, many in themselves, are few beside them.

Gregory had already said as much of the hall of bad and good, which for him is the present Church. His hearers are not to be alarmed *quod in Ecclesia et multi mali et pauci sunt boni*, that in the Church the bad are many and the good few. The ark of the flood, a figure of the Church, was broad below, where it carried the beasts, and narrowed above to a single cubit, where it kept the men, because the holier men are, the fewer; “wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat”, and few find the narrow way that leads to life (Mt 7:13–14); and on the threshing floor *pauca sunt grana quae servantur horreis, et grandes acervi palearum qui ignibus comburuntur*, few are the grains kept for the barns, and great the heaps of chaff burned in the fire (38.8). Aquinas gives the saying its reason in the parable and joins it to the same verse of Matthew 7: *quia quidam nolunt venire, quidam non habent vestem nuptialem*, because some will not come and some do not have the wedding garment; whence, he says, Matthew 7:14, “strait is the way that leadeth to life”, *et pauci sunt qui inveniunt eam*, “and few there are that find it” (p. 282). Irenaeus reads it beside the former covenant: “For as in the former covenant, ‘with many of them was He not well pleased;’ so also is it the case here, that ‘many are called, but few chosen’” (IV.36.6; 1 Cor 10:5).

Hilary puts the scarcity among the chosen and not among the invited: *Non est igitur paucitas in invitatis, sed raritas in electis: quia in invitante sine exceptione publicae bonitatis humanitas est; in invitatis vero de iudicii merito probitatis electio est*, there is no fewness among the invited, but a rarity among the chosen, because in the one inviting there is a kindness of public goodness without exception, while among the invited the choosing is of their uprightness, by the merit of the judgment (22.7). The same witnesses keep the call itself without limit: Hilary in that sentence; Augustine in saying that the Lord's table is spread for all who will (90.1); Irenaeus in the King who "gathered from all quarters the faithful to the marriage of His Son" (IV.36.6); Gregory in the Church that now receives bad and good without distinction and parts them only at the going out (38.7). Jerome reads the saying differently, as the sentence that sums up every parable of this kind, the vineyard, the house and the wedding: *non initia, sed finis quaeratur*, not the beginning but the end is sought (col. 161).

Gregory turns the saying on his hearers. *Quia vocati sumus, novimus; si sumus electi, nescimus*, that we are called we know; whether we are chosen we do not know. *Tanto ergo necesse est ut unusquisque nostrum in humilitate se deprimat, quanto si sit electus ignorat*: so each of us must humble himself as much as he does not know whether he is chosen (38.14). He ends the homily on the same note: since no one is certain of his election, *omnes in sola divina misericordia gaudeant, nullus de suis viribus praesumat*, let all rejoice in the divine mercy alone, and let no one presume on his own strength (38.16). The fewness he has affirmed of the Church becomes, for each hearer, humility about himself and hope in mercy.

Grace that goes before and follows

The Collect asks for exactly what this interpretation says the guest lacked: that grace go before and follow the assembly and keep it intent on good works. No witness joins the prayer to the parable; but the pair of verbs it uses has a history in the reading of this Sunday's psalm. Aquinas, commenting on the psalm's last verse, "thy mercy will follow me", writes: *Alias petivit ut praeveniat, hic quod subsequatur: et utraque est necessaria: quia praeveniens est necessaria, quia inspirat animum, subsequensque iuvat ut efficiatur*: elsewhere the Psalmist asked that it go before, here that it follow, and both are necessary, the preventive because it inspires the mind, and the subsequent because it helps the work to be done (*Postilla super Psalmos* 22). In the *Summa* he finds the division of grace on the same verse and on "his mercy shall prevent me" (Ps 58:11), and quotes Augustine: *praevenit ut vocemur, subsequitur ut glorificemur* (I-II, q. 111, a. 3). The psalm verse shares one of the Collect's two verbs, *subsequetur* beside *sequatur*, and the pair of going before and following is Aquinas's, who joins Psalm 58:11 to this verse. Heard with the parable, this is the grace that clothes the guest and keeps the garment on him.

The commentators on the prayer, quoted with the Collect above, say what that grace does: without its going before, Fromage writes, there is not even the thought of good, and without its following no act of virtue; "If, on the other hand, we be faithful to grace, our life will be one uninterrupted tissue of good works". Neither he nor Schuster joins the prayer to the parable. Schuster, commenting on the Gospel itself, gives the parable's lesson in a sentence that holds the call and the garment together: "God calls our souls, but they must be in accord with their calling, so that the grace of eternal happiness may also be their due reward" (*The Sacramentary*, vol. 3, p. 173).

The Missal's texts in this reading

The Entrance Antiphon asks who could stand if the Lord marked iniquities, and in this interpretation it hears the guest's silence before the question was asked of him. Bellarmine's reading of the verse, given with the antiphon above, that without grace we can neither make satisfaction nor even see the enormity of the offence, is the reason no one could answer the king by his own resources, and Augustine's propitiation, the sacrifice offered for us, is the hope on which the antiphon turns. The first reading enters by a word. Isaiah's death cast down for ever is quoted by Paul as "Death is swallowed up in victory" when the mortal has put

on immortality (1 Cor 15:53–54), and Irenaeus, explaining the garment, cites Paul’s wish to be “clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up by immortality”. The three passages share the swallowing of death, and in this interpretation the garment is what the mortal puts on when death is swallowed up.

The second reading names the strength in which the garment is worn. On “I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me” Chrysostom and Aquinas, quoted under the third interpretation, both give the strength to God and not to Paul; the third *Mystagogical Catechesis* puts the verse in the mouth of the newly anointed. The acclamation prays for the enlightened eyes that know the hope of the calling, and Chrysostom’s comment that God “would thus have us become good of our own will” is this interpretation’s whole difficulty in a sentence: the call is God’s and the response is willed. The Prayer over the Offerings asks that through these acts of devout worship, *per haec piae devotionis officia*, the faithful pass to heavenly glory; heard here, the works of which the garment is made are offered.

Where the first Communion antiphon is chosen, the rich who went hungry are set against the heart that Augustine calls “filled with such jewelry of virtues, justice, truth, charity, faith, endurance” (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 33). Where the second is chosen, the promise of seeing him as he is has, in the letter, the next verse beside it: “every one that hath this hope in him sanctifieth himself” (1 Jn 3:3), which the antiphon does not include. Augustine’s comment on that verse joins grace and will: “Who purifieth us but God? Yea, but God doth not purify thee if thou be unwilling. . . . Thou purifiest thyself, not by thyself, but by Him who cometh to inhabit thee” (*Homilies on the First Epistle of John* 4.7). And Aquinas makes charity the measure of the vision itself: “he will have a fuller participation of the light of glory who has more charity” (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 12, a. 6). The Prayer after Communion asks to be made partakers of the divine nature. Aquinas calls grace that participation and derives the infused virtues from it (I-II, q. 110, a. 3); in this interpretation the garment is the life of that grace. The verse of 2 Peter whose words the prayer uses goes on, “flying the corruption of that concupiscence which is in the world”.

Where this interpretation strains

The first limit is the Gospel’s form. Under the shorter form the reading ends at v. 10, and of this interpretation’s Gospel centre only the gathering of “bad and good” remains, which Augustine reads as the present feast of good and bad and Gregory as the present Church where they mingle. The free call survives; the garment does not.

The second is that every answer to the guest’s difficulty is its author’s and not the parable’s. The parable does not say what the garment is, or where it was to be had. Augustine answers that the fault is not small because the garment is charity; Aquinas, that the king did not will the bad to come unless they prepared themselves; Hilary, that God alone saw what the servants could not; Cyril, that the guest saw the others in white.

The third is the disagreement already set out: the witnesses do not agree on what the garment is, and the interpretation, which rests on what they share, cannot settle it; whoever names the garment charity speaks with Augustine and Gregory, and not with Hilary.

Finally, the closing saying is larger than the scene it closes. The parable shows one guest cast out of a full hall; the saying speaks of many called and few chosen. Augustine and Gregory make the one stand for many, Gregory for the whole body of the wicked; Gregory and Aquinas read the few with the strait way that few find, Gregory adding the ark and the threshing floor, and Irenaeus with the many in whom God was not well pleased under the former covenant; Hilary finds the rarity among the chosen and never in the call. Their judgement on how few are chosen is drawn from those texts. The saying itself names no number.

The four senses of this interpretation

Literal.

In the longer form of the Gospel, the king, coming in to see the guests his servants gathered, finds one without a wedding garment, who has nothing to say and is cast out, for many are called and few are chosen. Under the shorter form, the servants gather bad and good alike, and the hall is filled.

Allegorical.

The garment is charity, which the Creator himself had when he came to the wedding of the Church (Gregory); or Christ put on by sacrament, charity and works (Aquinas); or the glory of the Spirit received at the confession and kept to the kingdom (Hilary). Grace goes before, calling, and follows, bringing to glory (Aquinas, with Augustine as he quotes him).

Moral.

Let charity be born, nourished and increased; clothe the naked, and be clothed (Augustine). Keep the garment the call gave you (Chrysostom). Be humble, not knowing whether you are chosen, and do not despair of a garment still imperfect (Gregory).

Anagogical.

In the longer form, the king's coming in is the judgment (Jerome, Gregory), at which not the beginning but the end is sought (Jerome), and few are chosen, as few find the strait way that leads to life (Gregory, Aquinas). Where the second Communion antiphon is chosen: the more charity, the fuller the vision of him as he is (Aquinas).

One to His Farm, Another to His Merchandise: Why the Invited Would Not Come

The parable's strangest fact is the refusal itself, and Chrysostom asks the question aloud: "For who would not choose to come to a marriage, and that a King's marriage, and of a King making a marriage for a Son?" (*Homilies on Matthew* 69.1). The first refusal in Matthew is not hostility. The invited "neglected and went their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise" (Mt 22:5); only "the rest" seize and kill the servants (22:6). This interpretation asks what kept the first ones away. The witnesses who expound the parable answer each in his own terms. Gregory reads the farm and the merchandise as earthly labour beyond measure and the greed of gain, and Hilary as worldly ambition and the love of money; Chrysostom and Aquinas judge that no temporal cause, however reasonable it seems, excuses a refusal of God; Jerome weighs the busy against the violent. Augustine and Bellarmine do not comment on the parable. They expound the psalm verse of the first Communion antiphon, on the rich who went hungry while those who seek the Lord lack nothing. The interpretation as a whole is the editor's: read along this line, the Mass sets beside the preoccupied the apostle who has learned to be full and to be hungry, and the rich who went hungry beside those who seek the Lord. No witness joins the parable's excuses to Philippians or to the psalm verse. Both forms of the Gospel contain the verses this interpretation rests on.

The farm and the merchandise

Matthew gives two excuses, the farm and the merchandise. Luke's parable of the great supper has three, a farm, five yoke of oxen and a wife (Lk 14:18–20). John Chrysostom, preaching on Matthew, lists "yokes of oxen, and pieces of ground, and wives", drawing on Luke; the oxen and the wife are not in this Gospel. What he draws from the excuses holds for Matthew's two: "And yet the excuses seem to be reasonable; but hence we learn, though the things which hinder us be necessary, to set the things spiritual at a higher price than all." The invited did not stay away because they were too busy: "For not for press of business,

but from ‘making light of it,’ they did not come”; and “when spiritual things call us, there is no press of business that has the power of necessity” (69.1). Thomas Aquinas makes the same judgment in a sentence: *Videbantur habere iustam causam exterius; sed Dominus non recipit: quia nulla temporalia debent detinere de veniendo ad Deum*, outwardly they seemed to have a just cause, but the Lord does not accept it, because no temporal things ought to keep anyone from coming to God (*Super Matthaeum* c. 22, Venice, p. 281).

Gregory the Great reads the two excuses as two habits of life. *In villam quippe ire est labori terreno immoderate incumbere, in negotiationem vero ire est actionum saecularium lucris inhiare*: to go to the farm is to lie on earthly labour beyond measure, and to go to the merchandise is to gape after the profits of worldly business. What they refuse is not a meal but a mystery. The man intent on earthly labour, or given over to the business of this world, *mysterium incarnationis dominicae pensare et secundum illud vivere dissimulat*, pretends not to see the need to weigh the mystery of the Lord’s Incarnation and to live by it, and so, as if going off to farm or trade, he refuses to come to the king’s wedding (*Homiliae in Evangelia* 38.5). Hilary of Poitiers reads the excuses as ambition and avarice: some were held *ambitione saeculi tamquam agro*, by worldly ambition as by a field, and more *ob pecuniae cupiditatem negotiatione*, by trading for love of money (*Commentarius in Matthaeum* 22.5, PL 9, col. 1043). Aquinas reports Hilary’s reading, the farm as the appetite for human glory and the trade as *appetitus avaritiae*, the appetite of avarice (p. 281).

Jerome sets the busy beside the violent and weighs them: *Minoris enim criminis sunt qui occupati aliis rebus venire noluerunt, his qui, contempto invitantis affectu, verterunt humanitatem in crudelitatem*, those who, taken up with other things, would not come are guilty of a lesser crime than those who, despising the affection of the one inviting, turned kindness into cruelty (*Commentarii in Matthaeum* III, PL 26, col. 159). The lesser crime is still a refusal, and the busy are among those who “were not worthy” (22:8).

Those whom no prosperity accompanies

The king’s second command sends the servants *ad exitus viarum*, to the places where the roads go out. Gregory reads the roads as men’s actions and their outlets as the failure of actions, *quia illi plerumque facile ad Deum veniunt, quos in terrenis actibus prospera nulla comitantur*, because those very often come easily to God whom no prosperity accompanies in their earthly doings (38.6). Jerome reads the same words of the gentiles: *Gentilium populus non erat in viis, sed in exitibus viarum*, the people of the gentiles was not on the roads but at the outlets of the roads (col. 160). The two readings answer different questions, Jerome’s who the new guests were and Gregory’s why they came; Gregory’s reading closes the circle of this interpretation, for those who came easily were those whom the farm and the merchandise did not hold.

To be full and to be hungry

The second reading gives the other side of the refusal: a man who has learned not to be held by either plenty or want. “I know both how to be brought low, and I know how to abound . . . both to be full and to be hungry: both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me” (Phil 4:12–13). John Chrysostom hears in “I have learned” a discipline: “this is an object of discipline, and exercise, and care, for it is not easy of attainment, but very difficult, and a new thing.” Plenty, he says, is as dangerous as want: “There is great need of virtue, not less than in the other case. For as want inclines us to do many evil things, so too doth plenty”; “Many know not how to be full, as for example, the Israelites, ‘ate, and kicked’ ” (Deut 32:15). And he will not let Paul boast: “The success is not mine own, but His who has given me strength” (*Homilies on Philippians* 15).

Thomas Aquinas makes the same verses the mark of the wise man. *Nihil demonstrat ita mentem sapientis perfecti, sicut quod sciat uti quolibet statu*: nothing shows the mind of a perfect wise man so well as that he knows how to use any state; *ille perfectus est qui scit uti quolibet statu, ut si sit in magno non elevetur, et si in minimo non deiiciatur*, he is perfect who knows how to use any state, so that in a great one he is not lifted up and in the least he is not cast down. Both states carry a danger: *in utroque est periculum, quia ex*

abundantia erigitur animus contra Deum, ex paupertate deiicitur . . . Sed Apostolus . . . virtute in utroque scit uti, in both there is danger, because from abundance the mind is raised against God and from poverty it is cast down; but the Apostle knows how to use both with virtue. And “I can do all things” means *Non possem hos insultus sustinere, nisi manu Dei me confortante*, I could not bear these assaults unless the hand of God were strengthening me (*Super Philippenses* c. 4, lect. 2, Dessain, pp. 401–403).

Heard beside the parable, Paul is the guest who would have come. He is not without goods, for he has just received the Philippians’ renewed care (4:10, 14); he is free of being held by them. The invited went off to farm and trade, and Paul, who knows abundance and want alike, says he can do all things in the one who strengthens him. The *Ordo*’s title for the reading, *Omnia possum in eo, qui me confortat*, singles out the verse on which it turns, within the reading’s own course.

The reading ends with God’s supplying of the Philippians’ want, and the two witnesses read that verse from different texts. In the Vulgate and the Douay–Rheims it is a wish, “may my God supply all your want”, and Aquinas expounds the Vulgate’s *impleat omne desiderium*: first as God’s return to the givers who had filled Paul’s need, *Impleat, etc., quia implestis meum*, may he fill yours, because you have filled mine; then of the fulfilment of all desire in glory, *quia ibi implebitur totum desiderium*, with the psalm verse *Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua* (p. 403). Chrysostom’s text is a blessing, and he notes that Paul “invokes blessings upon them, as poor men do”. The *Nova Vulgata*, which the *Ordo* follows, has a promise, *implebit omne desiderium*, with the same *desiderium*: the two Latin texts differ only in the mood of the verb. Aquinas’s reading of desire filled in glory rests on that word, desire, which the Douay–Rheims renders “want”; it is used here as his.

The rich who went hungry

Where the first Communion antiphon is chosen, the Mass ends this line with the psalm verse on the rich who hungered. Augustine meets the objection that the verse seems false, for “many rich men that are wicked die in their riches”, and the man who sees it says, “the Scripture has deceived me”; such a man “seeketh mortal food on the earth, and seeketh not a true reward in heaven”. The answer is the spiritual sense. “When thou art filled with spiritual riches, canst thou be poor? And was he therefore rich, because he had a bed of ivory; and art thou poor who hast the chamber of thy heart filled with such jewelry of virtues, justice, truth, charity, faith, endurance?” The rich who seem full are the hungry ones: “Those rich then lack, they lack, and what is heavier, they lack bread”, the bread of the one who said, “I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven” (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 33, sections 13–14 of the English text). Robert Bellarmine gives the verse a literal sense, that the rich “began to hunger and to need, because riches are fallacious and uncertain”, and then “a higher meaning”: “those who are attached to the temporalities of this world always hunger and need, for they are always covetous and desirous of having more; but ‘they that seek the Lord,’ as they seek a thing of infinite value, a thing greater than their desires . . . as they cling to the Supreme Good, they possess all that is good” (*Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Ps 33:10–11).

The Hebrew of the verse has young lions where the Latin has the rich, so this reading rests on the Latin and Greek text that the Missal cites. Within that text, the antiphon answers the parable’s refusers exactly: they went off to their goods and are the rich who go hungry; the seekers of the Lord lack nothing. The responsorial psalm has already said the same in its first line, “The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want nothing”, which Aquinas, as quoted with the psalm above, reads of the future, when nothing will be lacking because we shall have God.

The Missal's texts in this reading

The Entrance Antiphon's question, who shall stand, meets in Augustine's exposition, quoted with the antiphon above, a description of the preoccupied: those who prosper in iniquity are the deeper in the depths the happier they seem, for "a deceitful happiness is itself a greater unhappiness". The Collect asks that grace keep the assembly *intentos*, intent, on good works; the word names the attention that the invited gave to farm and trade.

The first reading supplies what the refusers did not do. "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him" (Is 25:9), and Jerome glosses the waiting: *expectavimus eum, hoc est, verbis eius credidimus*, we waited for him, that is, we believed his words (*Commentarii in Isaiam* VIII, PL 24, cols. 300–301). The invited of the parable had been told twice; the people of Isaiah's mountain believed the word and waited. The acclamation asks for eyes enlightened to know the hope of our calling, and Aquinas, as quoted with the acclamation above, reads Paul's prayer against those whose eyes are enlightened only to know temporal things. The Prayer over the Offerings offers the faithful's prayers with the sacrificial gifts: heard in this reading, goods given rather than held. Chrysostom's word on the Philippians' gift, that what counted was "not the money, but the purpose", belongs to v. 18, which is not read, and stands here only as context.

Where the second Communion antiphon is chosen, the promise of seeing him as he is becomes, in Augustine's exposition of the verse, a lesson in desire. "The whole life of a good Christian is an holy desire"; God, "by deferring our hope, stretches our desire; by the desiring, stretches the mind; by stretching, makes it more capacious. Let us desire therefore, my brethren, for we shall be filled." But the vessel must first be emptied: "holy longing exercises us just so much as we prune off our longings from the love of the world. . . . Suppose that God would fill thee with honey: if thou art full of vinegar, where wilt thou put the honey?" (*Homilies on the First Epistle of John* 4.6). The guests who went off to their farms were full. The Prayer after Communion asks to be made partakers of the divine nature, and the verse of 2 Peter whose words it uses continues, "flying the corruption of that concupiscence which is in the world" (2 Pet 1:4), though the prayer does not quote that clause.

Where this interpretation strains

The refusers in the parable are not only busy. "The rest" seize the servants, treat them shamefully and kill them (22:6), and Jerome's distinction between the lesser crime of the occupied and the greater crime of the cruel shows that a reading of the parable as a story of distraction misses half of it; the first interpretation keeps that half. Matthew's excuses are two, and Chrysostom's oxen and wife belong to Luke. The second reading follows its own course through Philippians and comes to its end this Sunday for that reason; no witness joins it to the parable or sets Paul beside the invited. The first Communion antiphon's rich are the reading of the Latin and Greek text, not of the Hebrew. And the verse on God's supplying of want is a wish in the Vulgate and a promise in the *Nova Vulgata*, though both read *desiderium*; what Aquinas draws from that word is drawn from the Latin, and an English that speaks of want or need does not carry it.

The four senses of this interpretation

Literal.

The invited make light of the king's wedding and go off, one to his farm and another to his merchandise. Paul writes that he has learned to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to suffer need, and that he can do all things in him who strengthens him.

Allegorical.

The feast refused is the wedding in which the Father joined the holy Church to the Son through the mystery of the Incarnation (Gregory), the mystery the preoccupied will not weigh or live by (Gregory). Refused, the call passes to those at the outlets of the roads, whom no earthly prosperity accompanies (Gregory), the people of the gentiles (Jerome).

Moral.

The farm and the merchandise are earthly labour without measure and the hunger for gain (Gregory), worldly ambition and the love of money (Hilary). Set spiritual things above even necessary ones (Chrysostom); use plenty and want alike with virtue, by Christ's strength (Aquinas). Where the first Communion antiphon is chosen: seek the Lord, who fills what riches leave hungry (Augustine, Bellarmine).

Anagogical.

God fills all desire in glory: "I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear" (Aquinas, on the *desiderium* of Philippians 4:19). Where the second Communion antiphon is chosen: the desire stretched by waiting will be filled by the vision (Augustine).

The Three Interpretations Compared

All three interpretations read the parable as a call that is wholly God's gift and that can be refused or wasted. The first and the third end in a fullness, the first in the feast completed at the resurrection and the third in desire filled in glory; the second ends at the king's inspection and in a vision measured by charity. They differ in the question they put to the parable, and therefore in the verses on which they rest, in what they make of the rest of the Mass, and in what they ask of the hearer.

Question	The king's feast for all peoples	The garment the called must wear	Why the invited would not come
Which verses carry it?	Mt 22:2, 4, 8–10 with Is 25:6–9, the verses of the <i>Ordo</i> 's two correlated titles; in the longer form also v. 11.	Mt 22:11–14, in the longer form only.	Mt 22:3, 5–6, in both forms.
What is the feast?	The Son's wedding with the Church (Gregory, Jerome), spread now (Gregory; Augustine) and completed at the resurrection (Hilary; Aquinas).	Taken as given; the question is how the guest is fit for it.	The mystery of the Incarnation, which the preoccupied will not weigh (Gregory).
Who is excluded, and why?	Those who will not come; several Fathers identify the first invited with a people, a reading presented under the Council's bound.	The guest without the garment, for lack of charity (Augustine, Gregory) or of the garment received and not kept (Chrysostom, Hilary).	Those held by farm and trade, by gain and ambition (Gregory, Hilary, Aquinas).

Question	The king's feast for all peoples	The garment the called must wear	Why the invited would not come
What does the Collect say?	Grace goes before that we may be called and follows that we may be glorified (Aquinas quoting Augustine): the call and the feast.	Grace goes before and follows and keeps us intent on good works: heard as the prayer for the garment.	Intent on good works, not on farm and trade.
What do the Communion antiphons say?	First: the rich lack the Living Bread (Augustine). Second: the King seen as he is (Aquinas; Augustine), and in the longer form the King who comes in to see the guests.	First: the heart's riches of virtue (Augustine). Second: the hope that purifies; the more charity, the fuller the vision (Augustine; Aquinas).	First: the rich hunger, the seekers lack nothing (Augustine; Bellarmine). Second: desire emptied of the world to be filled (Augustine).
Principal witnesses	Gregory, Jerome, Hilary, Irenaeus, Aquinas.	Augustine, Gregory, Chrysostom, Irenaeus, Aquinas, Jerome, Hilary, who name the garment differently.	Gregory, Chrysostom, Aquinas, Augustine; Hilary, Jerome and Bellarmine supporting.
Under the shorter Gospel	Holds without v. 11: the two feasts are joined by the resurrection alone, without the judgment between them.	Holds only in part: its Gospel centre is in vv. 11–14.	Holds.

The first interpretation rests on the Lectionary's one official correlation, the feast of Isaiah with the wedding of the Gospel, and on witnesses who expound one or both of those readings; Aquinas's joining of Isaiah's feast to the king's dinner belongs to it. The second rests on the Gospel's closing verses, read only in the longer form, and on the Collect; Isaiah enters it only by the editor's verbal link of death swallowed up, which no witness of the garment draws. The third rests on the Gospel's fifth verse and reads the rest of the formulary from the second reading and the first Communion antiphon, which the books join to the Gospel by no relation at all and no witness joins to it.

They answer different questions about different verses, and so they reach different consequences. The first asks what God gives, and answers with the Church's present table and the resurrection; its consequence is hope and the universal reach of the call, and it must carry the parable's hardest verse, the burnt city, under the Council's bound. The second asks what those who have been gathered must have, and answers with a garment given and kept, which Augustine and Gregory name charity, and with the grace that follows; its consequence is humility and the works of love. The third asks what keeps the invited away, and answers with goods that cannot fill; its consequence is detachment and the right use of plenty and want. No witness cited denies another interpretation's claim, and Gregory and Aquinas each contribute to all three from different sentences: Gregory from his account of the wedding, of the garment and of the farm, Aquinas from his Isaiah, his garment of Christ and his refusal of every temporal excuse.

The interpretations also hear the same texts differently, and the differences are instructive. The Collect's grace that goes before and follows is, in the first, the call and the glory of the feast; in the second, the grace that clothes the guest; in the third, the attention turned from farm and trade. The second Communion antiphon's vision is, in the first, the King seen as he is; in the second, the vision measured by charity; in the third, the desire stretched by waiting. The Prayer after Communion's share in the divine nature is, in the first, the wedding of the Church shared at the table; in the second, the life of grace that the garment is; in the third, the flight from the concupiscence of the world that the verse of 2 Peter names.

Three real disputes among the witnesses cross these lines. What the wedding garment is divides Augustine and Gregory, who name charity and deny that it is baptism or faith, from Hilary, whose garment is the glory of the Spirit received at the confession of the good questioning, on the reading of his phrase as an

allusion to baptism. This touches the second interpretation at its centre. Whether the wedding is the present Church or the last banquet is a difference of emphasis between Gregory, who reads the parable of the present Church, and Hilary, who reads it of the glory of the resurrection, with Augustine's two feasts and Aquinas's four expositions between them; it touches the first interpretation, which joins the two by the resurrection and, where the longer form is read, by the judgment, and does not identify them. Whether the burnt city is Jerusalem under Titus or the eternal fire divides Chrysostom from Gregory and Hilary, with Jerome and Aquinas offering both; it touches the first and the third, and under either answer the identification of the first invited remains the reading of the Fathers who make it.

The shorter form of the Gospel changes the balance. Where it is read, the third interpretation holds whole. The first loses the king's coming in to see the guests: it keeps the feast spread now and the feast completed in the resurrection, joined by the resurrection alone and without the judgment between them, and the second Communion antiphon answers the King of the parable's opening rather than his inspection. The second keeps only the gathering of bad and good, without the garment that is its answer. The two Communion antiphons change it too: each interpretation hears both, but the first antiphon carries most weight in the third interpretation and the second in the first.

Scriptural Date and Location

Each passage the Mass reads or sings from Scripture, once, in canonical order; beneath each, its attribution, its setting and the dates the shared chronology corpus holds for it. The Entrance Antiphon, both Communion antiphons and the Alleluia verse adapt Scripture and are placed at the verses they adapt; the three orations carry no biblical date.

Textual unit	Citation	Location	Date
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 23 (22):1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; response v. 6cd	No place named in the verses	Historical setting – Occasion date unresolved. Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.

Inherited attribution: the Vulgate title *Psalmus David*, in the Douay–Rheims “A psalm for David” (22:1), ascribes the psalm to David; the title gives no date or occasion, and the corpus holds no date for the ascription. The setting answer is unresolved because the psalm names no occasion. The composition date shown is the Psalter’s common critical bound, taken from the introduction to the Psalms in the New American Bible Revised Edition, which holds that no individual psalm can be dated securely; it is not a date for this psalm.

Communion Antiphon, first option	cf. Ps 34 (33):11, an adaptation	By the title, the court of Geth, where David fled from Saul to Achis (1 Kgs 21:10)	Traditional attribution – disputed: David (reign in the usual chronology), B.C. 1055–1015. Superscription setting: David’s flight to Achis, king of Geth, A.M. 2944. Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
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Narrated event, by the title: David changing his countenance before Achimelech (33:1); the Douay–Rheims refers the title to 1 Kings 21, where David feigns madness before Achis, king of Geth (21:10–15).

Inherited attribution: the title “For David” (33:1). The attribution answer is David’s reign in the usual chronology reported by the *Catholic Encyclopedia*’s article on David (Corbett), which sets it beside later datings; the corpus marks it disputed. The superscription answer dates the episode the title names, on the A.M. reckoning that Haydock’s notes report; it is the title’s own assertion and not a date of composition. The composition answer is the Psalter’s common bound, not a date for this psalm. The antiphon’s “rich” is the Latin and Greek reading; the Hebrew has young lions.

Entrance Antiphon	Ps 130 (129):3–4, an adaptation	No place named in the verses	Historical setting – Occasion date unresolved. Composition: Before c. 165 B.C.
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A song of ascents, titled *Canticum graduum*, “A gradual canticle”; the title names no author and no occasion, and the setting answer is unresolved. The composition answer is the Psalter’s common bound, not a date for this psalm. The antiphon uses v. 3 and the first clause of v. 4; the query reaches the whole of both verses.

First Reading	Is 25:6–10a	“In this mountain” (25:6, 7, 10), the “mount Sion” and Jerusalem where the Lord of hosts reigns (24:23); the vision “concerning Juda and Jerusalem” (1:1)	Traditional attribution: Isaias (ministry in Souvay’s traditional account), B.C. 740–701.
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Traditional attribution: “Isaias the son of Amos” (1:1). The answer is the length of the prophet’s ministry as the *Catholic Encyclopedia*’s article on Isaias (Souvay) gives it, from the last year of King Ozias to the latest prophecies it admits; the same article reports an old tradition that the prophet lived into the reign of Manasses, which the answer does not carry. It dates the prophet, not chapters 24–27 or this oracle, for which the corpus holds no composition date. The query for v. 10 also covers the clause on Moab, which is not read.

Textual unit	Citation	Location	Date
Gospel, longer form	Mt 22:1–14	In the temple at Jerusalem, to “the chief priests and ancients of the people” (21:23)	Event: The parable of the marriage feast, proposed in the Temple, A.D. 29 (derived). Composition – disputed: c. A.D. 38–45; c. A.D. 40–42; A.D. 40–45; c. A.D. 60–68; c. A.D. 64–67; c. A.D. 50.
Gospel, shorter form	Mt 22:1–10	As for the longer form	Event: The parable of the marriage feast, proposed in the Temple, A.D. 29 (derived). Composition – disputed: c. A.D. 38–45; c. A.D. 40–42; A.D. 40–45; c. A.D. 60–68; c. A.D. 64–67; c. A.D. 50.
<i>Narrated event: a parable spoken in the temple, after the question about Jesus’ authority (21:23–27) and the parables of the two sons and of the vineyard.</i>			
Traditional attribution: St Matthew the Apostle. The event answer dates the telling of the parable, not the wedding it narrates: it is a derivation within the chronology of the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> ’s article on Jesus Christ (Maas), which places the parable of the marriage feast on the Tuesday of the last week in Jerusalem. The composition answers keep as disputed alternatives the figures the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> reports. Its article on the Gospel (Jacquier) gives four from the ancient writers, who “are at variance”, and the years that “Catholic critics, in general, favour” where “opinion is rather divided”; the last figure is said in its article on the New Testament (Durand) of the original text of Matthew, which that author holds to have been Aramaic. These are dates of the book, not of the saying.			
Alleluia verse	cf. Eph 1:17–18, an adaptation	From Paul, “the prisoner of Jesus Christ” (3:1); to “all the saints who are at Ephesus” (1:1)	Composition – disputed: A.D. 58–63; A.D. 61.
Traditional attribution: St Paul, writing in captivity. The first range is the one the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> ’s article on the letter gives for the letters of the captivity, where it leaves the place of the captivity, Caesarea or Rome, “a much mooted question”; the second figure is the year its chronology of St Paul (Prat) gives those letters. They date the letter, not the liturgical verse made from it.			
Second Reading	Phil 4:12–14, 19–20	From Paul “in my bands” (1:7, 13), with greetings from “Caesar’s household” (4:22); to “all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi” (1:1)	Composition – disputed: A.D. 61; A.D. 62–64.
Traditional attribution: St Paul, writing in captivity. The first figure is the year the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> ’s chronology of St Paul (Prat) gives the letters of the captivity, within his Roman captivity; the second is the range its article on the letter (Vander Heeren) gives for Paul “at Rome”, which it calls “the nearly unanimous opinion”.			
Communion Antiphon, second option	1 Jn 3:2, an adaptation	No place named in the letter	Composition: c. A.D. 90–100.
Traditional attribution: St John the Apostle. The range is the one the <i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> ’s article on the New Testament (Durand) gives for “the Johannine writings”; its article on the Epistles of St John (Drum) finds the arguments “probable in favour of Ephesus and also for the last few years of the first century”.			

Appendix: Liturgical Resolution

Celebration. The Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, a Sunday in Ordinary Time at place 6 of the table of liturgical days; green; Gloria and Creed. The formula is PC-S54-A, the Year A target of the parent PC-S54; it has the single Sunday form. A Mass anticipated on Saturday evening uses the same formulary, and there is no Vigil form.

Books, calendar and territory. The *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, for use in the dioceses of the United States of America (2011), whose Latin base is the *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia (2002), as reprinted with emendations in 2008; the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, second typical edition, volume I, no. 142, which follows the *Ordo lectionum Missae*, editio typica altera (1981); the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* in the United States edition of 2011 with the emendations of 2021; the *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*; and the *Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America* for 2026. Only the national calendar is applied. No diocesan, religious, parish, titular, dedication or patronal calendar was supplied, and none is assumed.

Cycle and occurrence. Year A of the Sunday cycle runs from 30 November 2025 to 22 November 2026, and the national calendar enters Sunday 11 October 2026 as the Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, green, with the readings of Lectionary no. 142 and Psalter Week IV. No other celebration stands on that date in the calendar's dated entries. The weekday cycle governs no Sunday.

The Missal formulary and the three cycles. The antiphons and orations belong to the Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time and are common to Years A, B and C; their text is recorded once, in the collection's record for that week. The readings, psalm and Alleluia verse are those of Year A alone. The second reading is the last of four in the Lectionary's course through Philippians in Year A, and the Gospel belongs to its semi-continuous reading of Matthew, between the parable of the vineyard on the previous Sunday and the question of tribute on the next.

Branches. No selection among the following was supplied, and none is inferred. Both forms of the Gospel and both Communion antiphons are studied in full; a claim resting on Matthew 22:11–14 does not hold for a celebration that uses the shorter form, and a claim resting on one Communion antiphon holds only where it is chosen.

Branch ID	Authority and trigger	Status	Units affected	Resolution
gospel-long-form	Lectionary no. 142 prints Mt 22:1–14 as the longer form	appointed alternative	Gospel	Unselected; studied in full. The choice follows the hearers' capacity to listen with profit (<i>Praenotanda</i> 80).
gospel-short-form	Lectionary no. 142 prints Mt 22:1–10 as the shorter form	appointed alternative	Gospel	Unselected; studied in full. It omits the guest without a wedding garment and the saying of v. 14.
communion-antiphon-psalm	The Missal prints cf. Ps 34 (33):11 first	appointed alternative	Communion Antiphon	Unselected; studied in full.
communion-antiphon-epistle	The Missal prints 1 Jn 3:2 second, under <i>Vel</i>	appointed alternative	Communion Antiphon	Unselected; studied in full. Rubric 6 for Ordinary Time prefers an antiphon that agrees with the Gospel; neither is drawn from a Gospel, and the books do not say whether either agrees with this one.
entrance-or-communion-chant-substitution	<i>General Instruction</i> 48 and 87: the Missal or <i>Graduale Romanum</i> antiphon, the <i>Graduale Simplex</i> , a chant from another approved collection of psalms and antiphons, or another suitable liturgical chant, the last two approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop	permitted	Entrance; Communion	Unselected; the Missal antiphons are the texts studied.

Branch ID	Authority and trigger	Status	Units affected	Resolution
psalm-or-acclamation- chant-substitution	<i>General Instruction</i> 61 and 62: a seasonal common psalm when the psalm is sung; the <i>Graduale</i> forms or another approved collection of psalms and antiphons, but never a song or hymn in place of the psalm	permitted	Responsorial Psalm; Alleluia verse	Unselected; the Lectionary’s psalm and verse are the texts studied.
offertory-chant	<i>General Instruction</i> 74	permitted	Preparation of the gifts	Unselected; the Missal prints no Offertory antiphon.
sprinkling-rite	<i>General Instruction</i> 51 and the Order of Mass: on Sundays the blessing and sprinkling of water may replace the Penitential Act	ritual substitution	Introductory Rites	Unselected; it brings its own texts.
compatible-preface- and-eucharistic- prayer	Rubric 5 for Ordinary Time; <i>General Instruction</i> 364–365	permitted	Eucharistic Prayer	Unselected; one of the eight Prefaces of the Sundays in Ordinary Time with a compatible Eucharistic Prayer, as one coupled choice.
eucharistic-prayer- iv-with-preface	<i>General Instruction</i> 365 d	conditional	Eucharistic Prayer	Unselected; Eucharistic Prayer IV keeps its own invariable Preface.
concluding-blessing- form	The Missal’s solemn blessings and prayers over the people, at the priest’s discretion	permitted	Concluding Rites	Unselected; none is appointed to this Sunday.
local-proper-calendar	<i>Universal Norms</i> 59–60 with a particular calendar	conditional	Whole Mass	Not supplied; a local celebration would need its own resolution.

Appendix: Scope and Qualifications

Edition and formulary. The study treats the Mass of the Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, as the *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, and the *Lectionary for Mass* give it for the dioceses of the United States, in the national calendar alone, for the occurrence of 11 October 2026. Identity, occurrence and branches are set out in the preceding appendix and recorded in `instance/manifest.md` and `research/context.md`.

Text control. The Missal formulary was read in the Latin of the *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia (2002), in a digitally typeset reproduction, and compared with the list of changes for the 2008 reprint in *Notitiae* 44 (2008), which lists none for this week, and with the *Antiphonary* excerpted from the English Missal (2010). No page of the 2008 reprint and no United States altar book was inspected, so the approved English orations were not read in any witness, and no chant book was collated. The Latin source of the Entrance Antiphon’s closing words is not established. The Lectionary’s boundaries rest on three witnesses that agree in every figure: the national calendar for 2026, the bishops’ conference’s dated page of readings, and no. 142 of the Latin *Ordo lectionum Missae* (1981); the printed United States Lectionary was not inspected. Four questions about the text remain open: whether the printed Lectionary gives the psalm response as the dated page does; whether the United States Lectionary admits another Alleluia verse from a common set on these Sundays; the Greek of Isaiah 25:6–10 and of Philippians 4:19, which was not examined; and manuscript evidence for Matthew 22:1–14 beyond what the SBL apparatus reports. No manuscript was examined.

English. All Scripture is printed in the Douay–Rheims version as revised by Bishop Challoner, a public-domain study translation of the Clementine Vulgate. It is not the text proclaimed in the celebration; the controlling English is that of the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, and for the antiphons and orations that of the *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, neither of which is reproduced. The orations and the antiphons are identified by Latin incipit and described; the descriptions are not translations and may not be quoted as the texts’ words. Where the Lectionary appoints part of a verse, the rest is marked beside it. English glosses of Latin passages are the editor’s renderings of the Latin printed beside them.

Reception. Each appointed Scripture passage has at least one ancient and one medieval or later witness read at an exact locus; the witnesses are those named in the References, and the search behind them is bounded and recorded in `research/scope.md`. For the second Communion antiphon the later witness is Aquinas’s doctrinal

use of the verse. Five passages rest on one ancient commentator each: the Entrance Antiphon's psalm and both Communion antiphons on Augustine, and the second reading and the source of the Alleluia verse on Chrysostom. Chrysostom, Augustine's sermons, his expositions of Psalms 22, 33 and 129 and his homilies on the First Epistle of John, the *Catechetical Lectures* of Cyril of Jerusalem and Irenaeus were read in the English of the Nicene and Ante-Nicene Fathers, Irenaeus in a machine-read text of the printed volume; Aquinas's *Summa* I in the English Dominican translation; Bellarmine in O'Sullivan's abridged English of 1866, the Latin not compared; Schuster in a text layer of the 1927 English and Fromage in the English of 1909, on a page image. Jerome on Matthew and Isaiah, Hilary on Matthew, and Aquinas on Matthew, Isaiah, Ephesians and Philippians were read on page images of the printings named; Gregory, Aquinas's commentary on the Psalms and *Summa* I-II in electronic Latin texts. No witness was collated with a modern critical edition. Not opened, among others: Origen and Rabanus Maurus on Matthew; Eusebius, Cyril of Alexandria and Theodoret on Isaiah; Cassiodorus on the psalms; Basil on Psalm 33; Marius Victorinus and Ambrosiaster on Philippians; Jerome on Ephesians; Bede on the First Epistle of John. Nothing is said here about who first proposed any reading, about any reading being the Fathers' common view, or about the order in time or the mutual dependence of the witnesses. No commentary on the Prayer over the Offerings or the Prayer after Communion was found. Fromage's and Schuster's comments on the Collect, and Schuster's on the Gospel, come from their commentaries on Masses that differ from this formulary in their other elements, and each is cited only for the element it shares with this one. The *Mystagogical Catecheses* are cited as transmitted under Cyril's name: their editor reports manuscripts that give them to John of Jerusalem, his successor, and they support no claim here on their own.

Relations among the elements. Four relations are stated by the liturgical books: the first reading is chosen in relation to the Gospel (*Praenotanda* 106), the psalm responds to the first reading (*General Instruction* 61), the acclamation greets the Gospel (*General Instruction* 62), and the second reading and the Gospel each belong to a semi-continuous course. The Missal's antiphons and orations serve all three years. The recurrence of the words for calling, feasting and hunger, riches and glory, clothing and seeing across the texts is an observation about the texts. Among the witnesses cited, Aquinas joins Isaiah 25:6 to Matthew 22:4 and to Psalm 22:5, and reads Psalm 22:6 as the subsequent grace whose pair of terms the Collect uses, without citing the Collect; Augustine joins Psalm 33:11 to John 6:51. Every other connection drawn between one element and another is the editor's synthesis, grounded in a witness's statement about his own passage where one is cited and otherwise an editorial proposal resting on the wording of the texts. No witness cited comments on this Mass.

The Council's declaration. *Nostra aetate* 4 was read in the English and Latin of the Holy See's website. It is cited as the Church's teaching on how the identification of the first invited with a people is presented and applied, not as a judgment on the exegesis of any Father.

Chronology. The Date cells print the shared chronology corpus's answers with their relations and alternatives unchanged. The first reading's answer dates the prophet's ministry in one author's account, not the oracle. The Psalter's common composition bound is not a date for any of the three psalms; it was read in the current public text of the introduction it cites, not in the registered state. The superscription answer of Psalm 33 dates the episode its title names and rests on Haydock's notes, whose pages were not read here. The Gospel's event answer dates the telling of the parable in one author's chronology; its composition answers, and those of the epistles, are dates of the books. Writing sites, first readers and narrative settings are kept apart; the source checks and their limits are recorded in `research/scope.md`.

Rights. The Douay–Rheims, the Clementine Vulgate, the King James Version, the Nicene and Post-Nicene and Ante-Nicene Fathers, O'Sullivan's Bellarmine, the English Dominican *Summa*, the volumes of Migne, the Venice, Parma and Liège printings of Aquinas, Fromage's and Schuster's English, Wilson's and Feltoe's editions and the *Catholic Encyclopedia* are in the public domain. Gregory's Latin is quoted in short passages from a licensed electronic edition, and the Corpus Thomisticum texts of Aquinas's commentary on the Psalms and of *Summa* I-II in short phrases. The Latin and English of the Missal, the *Ordo lectionum Missae*, the Lectionary, the *General Instruction*, the national calendar, the *Nova Vulgata*, *Nostra aetate* and the introduction to the Psalms of the New American Bible are protected; they are cited, and only incipits, the three titles of the *Ordo*, short phrases of the Council's declaration and a few words needed by the argument are quoted.

Records. The composition of the target is audited in `propers/verified.md`; the reception search, loci, disagreements and negative results in `research/scope.md`; and the reasoning behind the three interpretations, with the class of every cross-element link, in `research/interpretations.md`. The research records received an independent review before the study was written.

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