

The Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

All Things Are Ready

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A homily

A king makes a wedding for his son. The invitations have gone out, and when the day comes the king sends his servants again. In the words of the old Douay Bible: “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.”

And they do not come.

Saint John Chrysostom, preaching on this Gospel, puts the obvious question. “For who would not choose to come to a marriage,” he asks, “and that a King’s marriage, and of a King making a marriage for a Son?” Who turns down a royal wedding?

Matthew tells us who. “But they neglected and went their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise.” One to his farm. Another to his business. Matthew does tell us of others, “the rest”, who seized the king’s servants and killed them. But the first refusal is not violence. They simply have somewhere else to be.

And there is nothing wrong with a farm. There is nothing wrong with a business. Most of us have something like them: a job, a household, bills to pay, work that has to be finished by Monday. These are not sins. They are the ordinary goods of an ordinary life, and many of them are duties.

That is exactly what makes the parable so uncomfortable, and Chrysostom saw it. “The excuses seem to be reasonable,” he says; “but hence we learn, though the things which hinder us be necessary, to set the things spiritual at a higher price than all.” And then, more sharply: “not for press of business, but from ‘making light of it,’ they did not come.” Matthew’s word, in the old translation, is *neglected*. They did not hate the king. They simply did not think his feast mattered as much as their own affairs. Saint Thomas Aquinas says the same in a single sentence: outwardly they seemed to have a just cause, but the Lord does not

accept it, because nothing of this passing world ought to keep anyone from coming to God.

So the question this Gospel puts to us is a quiet one. What is my farm? What is my merchandise? What is the good, reasonable, necessary thing that I keep allowing to stand between me and the King’s invitation?

But first: what is being refused? What is this feast?

The first reading has already told us. “The Lord of hosts shall make unto all people in this mountain, a feast of fat things, a feast of wine.” And on that mountain, Isaiah says, “He shall cast death down headlong for ever: and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from every face.”

The Gospel tells us whose feast it is. Saint Jerome, explaining this parable, says it plainly: this king is God almighty, and the wedding he makes is for our Lord Jesus Christ and for the Church. Saint Gregory the Great asked what that wedding is, and he answered with care. The Father made a wedding for his Son, he says, when through the mystery of the Incarnation he joined the holy Church to him. The feast is God’s own Son, made man, joined to his people.

And Gregory saw what the farm and the merchandise really cost. To go off to the farm, he says, is to throw oneself into earthly labour beyond all measure; to go off to the merchandise is to gape after the profits of worldly business. A man who lives like that will not stop to weigh the mystery of the Lord’s Incarnation, or to live by it. That is the real refusal. Not a dinner missed, but God made man passed over, because there was something else to do.

Now look at who does come. The king sends his servants into the highways, or, as the Latin says more exactly, to the places where the roads go out. “As many as you shall find, call to the marriage.” And the servants gather “all that they found, both

bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests.”

Gregory says of those roads that people very often come easily to God when no prosperity accompanies them in their earthly doings. The people where the roads went out had no farm to hurry back to. Nothing held them. And so they came.

There is hope here: no one is too far out on the road to be asked. And there is a warning: our successes can be the very thing that keeps us at home.

Is the answer, then, to own nothing? Saint Paul gives a better answer in the second reading. He writes to the Philippians, “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.”

Paul is not without goods: the Philippians have sent him help. But nothing he has holds him.

Chrysostom says that plenty needs as much virtue as want does: “For as want inclines us to do many evil things, so too doth plenty.”

Here is the guest who would have come. Not the man who has no farm, but the man whose farm does not keep him.

And notice what the Philippians did with their goods. “You have done well,” Paul tells them, “in communicating to my tribulation”: that is, in sharing my trouble. The very things that kept the invited away became, in their hands, a way of coming closer.

Matthew’s parable goes on. The king comes in to see his guests, and finds one man without a wedding garment. “Friend,” he says, “how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment?”

What is that garment? The Fathers give more than one answer. Saint Augustine and Saint Gregory say: charity. Not baptism, Augustine says. No one comes to God without it, but the good and the bad alike have been baptized. It is love. And Augustine tells his people where to find it. “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.’”

So the farm and the merchandise are not to be thrown away. They can be turned into the wedding garment. What we have can keep us from the feast, or it can clothe someone else, and so clothe us.

Jesus first told this parable in the temple, to the chief priests and the elders of the people. But Gregory and Chrysostom, preaching it, turned it on their own congregations, on the baptized, and so must we. Gregory told his people that it is we who recline at the wedding of the Word. This Mass is the King’s feast, spread now.

At its beginning we prayed that God’s grace would go before us and follow us, and the Latin of that prayer asks that grace keep us intent on good works. Gregory used that same word for the man who went off to his farm: he was intent on earthly labour. We have asked to be intent on something else.

In a moment we will bring our gifts and ask that through this worship we may pass over to heavenly glory. Then we will be fed with the Body and Blood of Christ, and ask to be made partakers of the divine nature. One of the two antiphons the Missal gives for Communion today says that the rich have known want and hunger, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. Saint Augustine said what the rich go without: “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.”

So here is something to do this week. Name your farm. Name your merchandise. Name the one good and reasonable thing that most often stands between you and God: the work that spills into Sunday, the screen that swallows the hour you meant for prayer, the worry about money that crowds out everything else. Do not despise it. But take something from it this week and give it away: an hour to someone who is alone, money to someone in need, a meal to someone who is hungry. Clothe the naked, and you will be clothed.

And then come back. The servants are still being sent: to the farm, to the shop, to the places where the roads go out. And the message has not changed. “Behold, I have prepared my dinner . . . and all things are ready. Come ye to the marriage.”

Note on Sources and Delivery

Audience and occasion. An adult parish assembly, at the Mass of the Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A: *Dominica XXVIII “per annum”* of the *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, for the dioceses of the United States, with no. 142 of the *Lectionary for Mass*, for the occurrence of 11 October 2026. The words hold under either form of the Gospel. Everything said of the invitation, the refusal, the roads and the full hall stands in Matthew 22:1–10, which both forms read; the guest without the wedding garment (22:11–13) is introduced as what Matthew’s parable goes on to tell, and not as words the assembly has necessarily heard. Of the two Communion antiphons, the first is named as one of the pair the Missal gives.

Length and pace. The spoken body runs to 1,465 words, counted as whitespace-separated words once comments and markup are removed: a little over eleven minutes at an unhurried 130 words a minute, a little over eleven and a half at 125, and a little over twelve at 120. That is arithmetic on the word count; no speaker has delivered these words and no delivery has been timed. The prose was read through in full for sense, sentence length and ease of speech, silently and not aloud.

Relation to the reviewed interpretations. The argument preached is chiefly the third of the expansive study’s three interpretations, *One to His Farm, Another to His Merchandise: Why the Invited Would Not Come*. The first refusal is not hostility but neglect for good and necessary things, and nothing temporal ought to keep anyone from coming to God. Chrysostom and Aquinas on the excuses, Gregory on the farm, the merchandise and the roads, Chrysostom on Philippians 4 and Augustine on the psalm of the first Communion antiphon carry it. It is joined to the first, *The King’s Feast for All Peoples*, for what is refused: Isaiah’s feast on the mountain, Jerome’s king who is God almighty making the wedding for Christ and the Church, Gregory’s wedding of the Son with the Church through the Incarnation, and his hearers who recline at the wedding of the Word. From the second, *Friend, How Camest Thou In?*, it takes the garment as charity, with Augustine and Gregory, and Augustine’s “Clothe others”. The comparison in the study finds that no witness cited denies another interpretation’s claim, and Gregory contributes to all three from different sentences; the combination preached asserts nothing any of the three denies. Of the dispute over what the garment is, the homily says only that the Fathers give more than one answer and follows Augustine and Gregory. The identification of the first invited with a people is not preached, and the application falls on the baptized.

Each Father is credited only with what he says of his own passage: Chrysostom’s question who would not come, his reasonable excuses and his “making light of it” of Matthew 22, and his plenty that needs virtue of Philippians 4; Aquinas’s just cause that the Lord does not accept; Jerome’s king who is God almighty and makes the wedding for Christ and the Church; Gregory’s wedding of the Son, his farm and merchandise as earthly labour and worldly gain that will not weigh the mystery of the Incarnation, his roads where no prosperity accompanies, his garment of charity and his hearers who recline at the wedding of the Word; Augustine’s garment that is not baptism but charity, his “Clothe others” and his rich who lack bread. The following connections are the homily’s own, drawn from the wording of the texts, and no Father makes them: Gregory’s *intentus* of the man gone to his farm (38.5) set beside the Collect’s *intentos* on good works (the study links the Collect’s word to the attention the invited gave to farm and trade; matching it to Gregory’s word is the homily’s own observation); Paul of Philippians 4 as the guest who would have come; the Philippians’ gift as a way of coming closer; the farm and the merchandise turned into the wedding garment by giving; this Mass as the King’s feast spread now, with the Prayer over the Offerings and the Prayer after Communion read as its course; and the servants still sent to farm, shop and roads.

Left to the studies: the burnt city and its dispute; Hilary’s ambition and avarice and his garment of the Spirit; Jerome’s lesser crime of the busy; Irenaeus on the one Father of the wedding; the Alleluia verse; the Entrance Antiphon and the responsorial psalm; the second Communion antiphon; Aquinas on the use of every state and on desire filled in glory; Bellarmine on the psalm; and the sacramentary history of the orations.

Texts quoted, and their route. Scripture is quoted in the Douay–Rheims version as revised by Bishop Challoner, a public-domain study translation, at Mt 22:4–6, 9–10 and 12 (with 21:23 and 22:11 narrated), Is 25:6 and 8, and Phil 4:12–14. It is not the English proclaimed at Mass, which is that of the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America* and is not reproduced. The Vulgate’s *ad exitus viarum* of Mt 22:9 is explained, not quoted. The Collect, the Prayer over the Offerings, the Prayer after Communion and the first Communion antiphon are described after the study’s descriptions of the Latin of the *Missale Romanum*; the descriptions are not translations and are not the prayers’ words. Chrysostom’s homilies on Matthew and on Philippians and Augustine’s sermons and exposition of the psalm are quoted in the English of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; each of those quotations was read in the tracked text at the locus below. Augustine’s account of the garment that is not baptism, with his clause that no one attains to God without baptism, is followed in that English without quotation marks. Jerome, Gregory

and Aquinas are reported without quotation marks, in English that renders the Latin the study prints; Gregory's Latin was read again in the tracked text, and Jerome's on the retained page image of Migne's column, at the loci below.

Exact loci. Chrysostom, “For who would not choose to come to a marriage . . .”, “The excuses seem to be reasonable . . .” and “not for press of business, but from ‘making light of it’ . . .”: *Homilies on Matthew* 69.1; his hearers “having partaken of the mysteries”: 69.2; “For as want inclines us to do many evil things, so too doth plenty”: *Homilies on Philippians* 15. Aquinas, *Videbantur habere iustam causam exterius; sed Dominus non recipit: quia nulla temporalia debent detinere de veniendo ad Deum: Super Matthaeum* c. 22, p. 281. Jerome, *Rex iste qui fecit nuptias filio suo, Deus omnipotens est. Facit autem nuptias Domino nostro Iesu Christo et Ecclesiae: Commentarii in Matthaeum* III, on Mt 22:2, PL 26, col. 159. Gregory, *Apertius ergo atque securius dici potest quia in hoc Pater regi Filio nuptias fecit, quo ei per incarnationis mysterium sanctam Ecclesiam sociavit: Homiliae in Evangelia* 38.3; *In villam quippe ire est labori terreno immoderate incumbere, in negotiationem vero ire est actionum saecularium lucris inhiare*, with the mystery of the Incarnation not weighed: 38.5; *illi plerumque facile ad Deum veniunt, quos in terrenis actibus prospera nulla comitantur*: 38.6; the garment as charity: 38.9; *Nos sumus, fratres charissimi, qui in nuptiis Verbi discumbimus*: 38.11. Augustine, the garment that is not baptism, without which no one attains to God, but charity: *Sermo* 90.5–6; “Do not say; ‘we are too poor to have that garment.’ Clothe others . . .”: *Sermo* 95.7; “Those rich then lack, they lack, and what is heavier, they lack bread” and “I am the Living Bread . . .”: *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 33, section 14 of the English text.

References

- *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia (Typis Vaticanis, 2002), *Dominica XXVIII “per annum”*.
- *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, second typical edition, vol. I, no. 142, as witnessed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America* 2026, pp. 5 and 40, and its page of readings for 11 October 2026, <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/101126.cfm>.
- The Holy Bible, Douay–Rheims version, revised by Bishop Richard Challoner (Project Gutenberg text): Is 25:6, 8; Mt 21:23; 22:2–14; Phil 4:12–14.
- *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae editionis* (Clementine Vulgate), eBible.org text: Mt 22:9.
- St John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 69.1–2, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., vol. 10; *Homilies on Philippians* 15, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., vol. 13 (both in the electronic text of the Christian Classics Ethereal Library).
- St Augustine, *Sermo* 90.5–6 and 95.7 (Sermons 40 and 45 on the New Testament Lessons), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., vol. 6.
- St Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 33 (section 14 of the English text), Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st ser., vol. 8.
- St Jerome, *Commentarii in Matthaeum* III, on 22:2 (Migne, PL 26, Paris, 1845, col. 159).
- St Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 38.3, 5–6, 9, 11, Latin (Wikisource text).
- St Thomas Aquinas, *Super Evangelium Matthaei* c. 22, in *Opera*, editio altera Veneta, vol. 3 (Venice: Bettinelli, 1745), p. 281.

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