

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The table and the shared need

Roman Missal, Third Edition — United States, Year A

11 October 2026 · Homily

The table is ready. That is where the king's invitation begins in today's Gospel. He has prepared the feast for his son. The guests do not have to supply it. They are asked to come.

Yet some turn away. One goes to his farm, another to his business. Ordinary concerns fill their attention until there is no room for the extraordinary gift being offered. Others answer with violence. The parable's judgment is severe. Refusing God is no small matter. But the king's purpose is not defeated: his servants go out again, and the room fills with people gathered from the roads, bad and good together.

No one in that room can boast of having provided the feast. Everyone has been called to receive. And everyone finds other guests there, people whose lives still need to change. God's gift brings them into company.

Now set beside that crowded room a sentence from our second reading. Paul tells the Philippians that he knows hunger. He knows what it is to have enough, and what it is to go without. Here is someone who belongs to Christ, someone who trusts him, and he can still be hungry.

How do these things belong together? God prepares a feast; his servant lacks food. Isaiah promises abundance; Paul speaks about need. What does God's provision mean for someone whose circumstances are still painful?

We can begin by listening carefully to Paul's claim about strength. Christ enables him to endure both plenty and want. Paul is not saying that faith makes every undertaking succeed. He is speaking about remaining faithful when life changes, when there is much to enjoy and when there is very little to live on. Neither condition has to become his master. Christ sustains him in both.

Then comes the turn we must not miss. Immediately after speaking about Christ's strength, Paul praises the Philippians for sharing his distress.

Their help was good. Their generosity mattered. Trust in Christ has not made their gift unnecessary.

Saint John Chrysostom notices how carefully Paul holds those truths together. Paul will not let his benefactors imagine that they own him because they have helped him. But he will not let them think their help is worthless either. He draws them close again by thanking them for their fellowship in his suffering. They have entered into his trouble with him.

This changes the way we speak about faith and need. Someone who trusts God may still need groceries, company, or help with a task that has become too heavy. Their courage does not cancel our responsibility. Their patience does not mean that everything is all right. We cannot point to their faith and use it as our reason for walking away.

And if we are the person who needs help, Paul gives us room to receive it. Depending on Christ does not mean becoming a person who depends on nobody. We need not prove our faith by hiding every difficulty. Gratitude for another person's kindness can belong to trust in God. The gift does not make the giver our owner, and receiving it does not make us less worthy of love.

The Gospel's feast now becomes more searching. The guests who return to farm and business are occupied with what they already have. The invitation asks them to receive something they cannot provide for themselves. We too can become so absorbed in keeping our own lives under control that we resist being gathered into a life with God and with others.

Sometimes that resistance appears as refusal to give: another person's trouble would interrupt our plans. Sometimes it appears as refusal to receive: we would rather remain alone than admit we cannot manage. Paul's words open both closed doors. Christ strengthens him, and the Philippians have done well to help. God's provision makes room for fellowship.

Our opening prayer at Mass asks for grace in the good we must do. Even our generosity needs God's help. We may need courage to notice a difficulty we have been avoiding, patience to keep helping after the first enthusiasm fades, or humility to accept care. Asking for grace brings us toward those acts. It does not make them unnecessary.

But a harder question remains. We can give food and still not cure every illness. We can sit beside someone who mourns and still not restore the person who has died. If God's feast is real, why does so much remain unfinished?

Look at the table in the responsorial psalm. It stands amid enemies. The Shepherd accompanies his people through the dark valley. The psalm does not wait until every danger has disappeared before it speaks of God's care. His presence is real within the trouble. The table is there while the journey is still difficult.

Isaiah carries the promise further. At the Lord's feast, death itself is defeated and tears are wiped away. No comfortable afternoon, no full cupboard, no human generosity can accomplish all of that. God's promise is greater than temporary relief. Its fullness lies ahead.

So hope does not ask the mourner to pretend that grief has ended. It does not tell the hungry person that bodily need is beneath our concern. It teaches us to receive the help given now, to give the help we can now, and to await the good that only God can complete. A shared meal matters, even though it cannot abolish death. A faithful visit matters, even though it cannot wipe away every tear.

At the Eucharist, Christ gives more than a reminder to be generous. He gives the nourishment of his own saving life. The one who feeds his Church is the Lord who suffered and rose from the dead. Our hope rests in him. His gift draws us into communion with him and with the people he gathers.

The prayer after Communion concerns the life that this nourishment gives: participation in God's own life. We remain his creatures, yet his gift truly changes us. We are being formed for a communion whose fullness is still to come. Love offered to a neighbor is one present fruit of that life. It is never the price with which we purchase the feast.

This week, let Paul's thanks make one response concrete. Think of a person whose difficulty you know. Ask what would actually help, and offer something you can carry through: food, an errand, or time to listen. Do not make their gratitude a debt. If you are carrying the difficulty, consider telling a trustworthy person what you need. You do not have to turn your suffering into proof that you can live without anyone.

These acts will not finish the world's sorrow. They can make one person's distress a little less lonely. They can give bodily form to the fellowship Paul praises. They can answer an invitation we might otherwise put off because we are busy managing our own affairs.

The table is ready. We come as people who need what Christ gives, and we find other people beside us who need it too. Receive his gift. Let it become care for someone else. The Shepherd is with us in the valley, and his feast leads toward the day when death will no longer take anyone from the table.

Source and delivery note

This homily addresses an adult parish assembly for the Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, 11 October 2026, in the U.S. Roman Missal, Third Edition; Lectionary no. 142. Its argument draws on the reviewed studies' reading, "The feast sustains those who still hunger." The decisive turn is Paul's commendation of help in Philippians 4:14 immediately after his affirmation of strength in Christ. Chrysostom explains that turn; Thomas Aquinas's distinction between the Church's banquet and heaven supports the Eucharistic and future horizon. Practical examples are applications, not reports of events.

The speech uses Matthew 22:1–10, common to both authorized Gospel forms. It neither assumes proclamation of the garment scene nor selects a Communion antiphon. The Collect and Prayer after Communion are explained by subject, without supplying substitute prayer texts. Biblical wording is original exposition from the public-domain Douay–Rheims/Challoner study witness, not a reproduction of the approved U.S. Lectionary. The speech contains no recited prayer or attributed direct quotation.

Spoken body: **1,208 words**; estimated **10.1–11.0 minutes** at 110–120 words per minute. The prose was silently reread for oral sense, sentence length, transitions and the return to the opening table image. No audible rehearsal or timed human delivery is claimed. This is authored Catholic preaching prose, not an official liturgical text or evidence of ecclesiastical approval.

References

- *Holy Bible*, Douay–Rheims, Challoner revision, Project Gutenberg eBook 1581: Mt 22:1–10 within 21–22; Is 25:6–10a; Ps 22:1–6 (Hebrew numbering 23); Phil 4:12–14, 19–20, with 4:10–18 as context. Public-domain study witness; the U.S. *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 142, governs proclamation.
- John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians* XV, especially ad 4:11–14 and 4:18–20; NPNF1 XIII, historical English CCEL witness. Paraphrased account of endurance, the donors' fellowship and the real good of assistance.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio super Isaiam ad litteram*, cap. 25, paragraph 84985, exposition of *Et faciet Dominus* and final *Nota* on the threefold banquet; Corpus Thomisticum Latin witness. Original explanatory synthesis, without reproducing the modern delivery.
- *Roman Missal*, Third Edition, U.S.: Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Collect and Prayer after Communion. Bounded approved excerpts in FDLC, *Mystagogical Reflections*, Ordinary Time 24–30 (2016), pp. 14–15. Prayer bodies are not reproduced; the older Collect conclusion in this witness is not offered for recitation.

Last revised (UTC): 2026-10-06T18:06:33Z

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