

Rev. Toan Do  
Isaiah 25: 6-10a  
Philippians 4: 12-14, 19-20  
Matthew 22: 1-14X

**TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
EPIPHANY CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Louisville KY, USA  
October 11, 2026

Many are invited, but only a few are chosen. Just a theological and a biblical clarification, the word many in Hebrew and in Aramaic really means all. In context we read the gospel today, if any of us has looked into the options in the lectionary there are two options. The first option is the longer version which I proclaimed this morning. The second version, which is a shorter one, the gospel stopped at the verse where it says, "Many were invited, bad and good alike, the hall was filled with guests." So, the shorter version left out the section where one of the invited guests came in without a wedding garment. He eventually was put out into the darkness, in the outer. Those two or three verses have put so many people at ought with themselves. Reading the passage, how could Jesus, or how could the Kingdom of Heaven, or likened to this king who threw a feast, here, could throw out one or a few?

The fact that these very verses, or the fact that the particular verse in which Jesus says, "This invited guest who was at the banquet without a wedding garment was put on the lip of Jesus and written down by Matthew for us to listen and learn, there is wisdom to it."

We should imagine that all were invited to the feast, but not all were ready. Not all are prepared to be part of that banquet.

We see that the gospel of Matthew was written, not only Matthew was facing the question, as we can imagine. Can the Kingdom of God accept everyone, evil and good alike? That question is also put on one who asked that question, "Do I live in a way worthy of the banquet? Am I coming to the banquet prepared and worthy of the invitation?" One, two, even three decades after the gospel of Matthew was written, we see and face a similar situation. During the time that Evangelist John wrote the gospel, we recall in chapter six, seven, and eight, there are places where John tells us that many of the people who followed Jesus at first, after listening to Him, following Him, seeing what He was doing, for example, He said, "those who eat my flesh and drink my blood will enter the Kingdom of Heaven," the question logically put in the minds of the people was; how can a human person, Jesus Himself, give them flesh and blood to drink?

If they did not look beyond what was being said to them, then that very saying of Jesus makes it almost impossible in the minds of human logic. Many of them as a result of that began leaving Jesus, leaving His foe. Later in the second century, for example, in the first letter of John, we even heard phrases like the antichrist in chapter two and chapter four. Also, in the second letter of John, the word or the phrase antichrist appears. Why? Because the author of these letters stated very clear, many of these people joined the Christian community at first, but then eventually found what was taught by Christian tradition became so difficult for them, became a stumbling block for their way of life. So, they left and went out and did all of things against the Christian from which, at first, they seemed to have joined.

These instances in the gospel and later in the second century reminds us that in today's parable, Jesus not only spoke to the chief priests, the elders, but also, He speaks to us today. We often hear, or at least I haven't heard recently, the phrase when in Rome do like the Romans do. There's wisdom behind that phrase, for example, we join a certain community, or we go to someone's house, we don't want to do it our way to cause problems, to cause tension. When we visit friends, we follow the friend's custom. Of course, that also has two ways, I remember when I was a young seminarian back in the 1990's, hearing conversation, many of the details of the conversation or the story have escaped my memory. But back then the story goes like this.

There was one parish somewhere in Indiana and because of the dwindling or the decreasing number of members, there were letters written to the diocese requesting a change of leadership. After a while the diocese, the bishops, and the leadership team decided to send a new pastor there. He was there for a few months to a year. He left. The second time, another one came, he lasted for a year or so, he left. It repeated five times. So, finally, the diocese, or one can imagine that it is not possible to send any more new ones. So, the conclusion was, as we expected, that parish was closed. Thinking or using that example, we can say to ourselves, just like Jesus told the chief priest and the elders, recalling some of the scripture readings during the last two or three weekends. Let us recall two weekends ago; the father had two sons, he went to the first son, another parable, and asked him to go to the vineyard and work in the vineyard. The first son said no, but then he changed his mind and worked in the vineyard. When the same father went to the second son to ask him to go, he said yes, but then did not do it. So, the wisdom behind that parable that Jesus shared with His disciples was that unless one is willing to change one's mind, just like the elders and the chief priests, unless they continue to convert their way of life for the better, if they keep doing the same exact things without innovation, without spiritual renewal, they will not see the

beauty and creations of God in their work. Same thing, for someone who comes into the community without following the customs or certain ways of doing things that belong to that family, or that belong to that community, tensions will eventually arise.

The gospel today, Jesus reminds us of one important thing. All are invited and those who rejected the invitation from God, here, the chief priests and the elders, the rest of the gospel or the parable seems to imply to us, all are invited, good and bad, but those who are invited and who come later are not preparing themselves or have not prepared themselves to convert their way of life to become, for example, the Christian way of life, or the Catholic way of life, or the Lutheran way of life, or the Presbyterian way of life, or the Episcopalian way of life, unless they change their way of life to become truly God's children. In the same parable Jesus wants that person to be part of the community, but has never been, in fact, part of the community. The first letter of John and the second letter of John talks about the Antichrist, they first joined the community but found their Christian way of life was so difficult. For that reason, when they left, they became opponents of the community, to Christianity. We are invited; all are invited to God's banquet. God is open to every single person, good and bad, virtuous, and unvirtuous, but we, too, are encouraged to change our former way of life, to become God's children.