

**The Parable of the Royal Wedding Feast
(28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)**

Isaiah 25:6-10—The Messianic Banquet

1. Universal: “feast for all peoples” (Israel and Gentiles)
2. Sacrificial: feast of “fat things” = Temple sacrifices and fine “Wine” (cf. Lev 3:16!)
3. Supernatural: “death” is “swallowed up” “forever”!
4. Salvific: he takes away “reproach” and “saves” his people

Psalms 23—The Lord is My Shepherd

1. The Banquet of God: he “prepares” a “table”; “my cup overflows” (v. 5)
2. A Temple Banquet: I shall dwell “in the house of the Lord” (v. 6)

Phil 4:12-14, 19-20—I Can Do All Things through Christ

1. Have no “anxiety”: instead “prayer and supplication with thanksgiving” (4:6)

Matthew 22:1-14—The Royal Wedding Feast

1. Kingdom of Heaven = A Royal Wedding Feast
 - a. King = God
 - b. King’s Son = “Son” of God/Messiah (cf. 2 Sam 7; Psalm 89)
2. Old Testament Background: the Messianic Banquet (see Isa 25:6-7!)
 - a. Universal Banquet of Salvation
 - b. Sacrificial Banquet of Flesh and Wine
3. The Wedding Garment = Works of Charity
4. Old Testament Background: the Bridegroom Messiah (cf. Isa 61:1-10)
 - a. The LORD has “anointed” me = Messiah (Hb *mashiach*) (61:1)
 - b. He has “clothed me” with “garments of salvation” (61:10)
 - c. He has “covered me” with “the robe of righteousness” (61:10)
 - d. Dressed like a “bridegroom” (61:10)
5. Man w/out a “Wedding Garment”: cast into “outer darkness” (Matt 22:13)
 - a. “Outer Darkness” = *Gehenna* (realm of the damned)
 - b. Two Fates: “Kingdom of Heaven” or “Outer Darkness” (Matt 8:11-12)
 - c. What is the difference? *Works of charity* (cf. Matt 7:21; 25:31-46)
6. Message: “*Many* are called but *few* are Chosen” (Matt 22:14)

The Catechism on the Parable of the Royal Wedding Feast

1. Christ is “the Bridegroom” and “the Church” is “spotless Bride” (CCC 796)
2. “To gain the kingdom... Words are not enough. *Deeds are required.*” (CCC 546)

Pope St. Gregory the Great: the “Garment” of Charity

What then must we understand by the wedding garment but love? That person enters the marriage feast, but without wearing a wedding garment, who is present in the holy

church. He may have faith, but he does not have love. We are correct when we say that love is the wedding garment because that is what our Creator himself possessed when he came to the marriage feast to join the church to himself. (Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies* 38:9; trans. M. Simonetti, p. 146)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

1. What do you think the “kingdom of heaven” will be like? What the first image that comes into your mind? How does it compare to Jesus’ image of a “wedding feast” in the Parable (Matt 22:1-14)? How is it similar? How is it different?

2. Where is the ‘twist’ in the Parable of the Wedding Feast? What does it reveal about *what kind of wedding feast this is*? What does it say about the seriousness of the invitation to the kingdom of God?

3. How is the prophecy of the Messianic Banquet that Isaiah spoke of fulfilled in the Eucharist?

For Further Study

1. Brant Pitre, “Jesus, the Messianic Banquet, and the Kingdom of God.” *Letter & Spirit* 8 (2012-13): 35-54. An in-depth discussion of the parable of the royal wedding feast from a first-century Jewish perspective.
2. Manlio Simonetti. *Matthew* (2 vols.; Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture; Grand Rapids: IVP Academic, 2002), 1:146-47. A wonderful collection of ancient Christian explanations of the parable of the royal wedding feast.