

Homily 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) 2026'

'You have received freely, now freely give.' (Mt 10:8)

My Mum loved nothing more than a gathering of family and friends at our home. She would prepare an abundance of food and drink worthy of a king's banquet and insist that guests had 'just a little bit more.' More importantly she was abundant in her love of others, particularly family, ready to forgive our shortcomings and then put them out of her mind, never ever to be mentioned again. She knew that she had received in abundance from Christ and responded by trying to love God and others in return.

In today's First Reading Isaiah describes the final victory of the 'God of Abundance' and the banquet which follows. The prophet proclaims, 'On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. GOD will wipe away tears from all faces...' The 'mountain' Isaiah is referring to is Jerusalem, the mount of the fullness of revelation, where 'The Messiah of Abundance' would pay generously for all our faults and transgressions. It would therefore, be on that mountain that the great act of Salvation would be accomplished.

Today's Second Reading to The Philippians reiterates the generosity of God in Jesus whose sacrifice on the Cross enabled Paul to cry out, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me...God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.' Thus, our God is truly the 'God of Abundance'. He is abundant in love and self-sacrifice, abundant in compassion, abundant in forgiveness, abundant in mercy and thankfully, abundant in patience....

The Parable of The Wedding Feast in today's Gospel from St Matthew is a timely reminder to us all. God has gratuitously invited us to the celebratory feast of Christ's victory over sin and death, The Eucharist. The parable uses the image of the Wedding Feast, a frequent sign or symbol of God's creative, faithful and everlasting love for humankind, to describe the heavenly banquet – The Wedding Feast of The Lamb. To refuse an invitation by a king would be tantamount to an insult, extremely disrespectful and ungracious. The parable is directed at the Jewish Religious Leaders who refuse to recognise and accept The Messiah present amongst them. In Jesus' words they, '...paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants (The Prophets), treated them shamefully, and killed them.'

Clearly then, it is not enough to have salvation 'done to us' without any response by us. It is not enough to be a circumcised Jew, not sufficient to label ourselves as baptised Catholic.... We must respond to the invitation made to us by the 'God of Abundance' by trying to love as he loved us, just as my Mum tried to do. Only then will we be worthy guests at The Wedding Feast of The Lamb.

How stunningly beautiful is that!