

FIRST READING*Isaiah 25:6-10a*

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. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death for ever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.' For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM*Ps 23(22):1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6. R1*

R. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending.

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me; he revives my soul. R.

He guides me along the right path, for the sake of his name. Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death, no evil would I fear, for you are with me. Your crook and your staff will give me comfort. R.

You have prepared a table before me in the sight of my foes. My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. R.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending. R.

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SECOND READING*Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20*

Brothers and Sisters: I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, enlighten the eyes of our hearts, so that we may know the hope to which he has called us. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 22:1-14

At that time: Jesus again spoke to the chief priests and the elders of the people, in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, "Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.' " But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find." And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. 'But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'

REFLECTION

Isaiah's vision begins with abundance. God prepares a feast for all peoples, wipes away every tear, and destroys the shadow of death. Psalm 23 brings the same promise close to us: the shepherd leads, restores, anoints, and sets a table. On a Harvest Sunday, these images remind us that creation is gift before it is achievement. The food we gather, the life we share, and the hope set before us all begin in God's generosity. Jesus' parable carries that generosity into the roads beyond the city. The feast is ready, and the servants are told to invite everyone they can find, both bad and good. The kingdom is not a private dinner for those who have proved themselves deserving. It is God's table, opened by grace. But the wedding garment tells us that grace is never meant to leave us unchanged. St Gregory the Great says that the garment is love - the life of charity which must clothe those who accept the invitation. St Augustine makes the same point: it is possible to be inside the feast while refusing the love which gives the feast its meaning. Harvest therefore asks more of us than gratitude for what has been safely gathered into our own barns. Thanksgiving becomes Christian when it opens our hands. God's abundance is given to be shared with those facing hunger, grief, loneliness, and fear. At Mass, the feast promised by Isaiah is placed into our hands in Christ. We receive a gift we could never earn, and we are sent into the roads to extend the invitation, clothed in the love we have first received from him.

*Church Fathers: St Gregory the Great, Homily 38 on the Gospels;
St Augustine, Sermon 90.*