

HOMILY FOR THE 28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR A

Readings: Isaiah 25:6-10a; Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20; Matthew 22:1-14

Once upon a time, there was a tailor who mended clothes for everyone in the town. But strangely enough, he himself went about wearing a coat that was falling to pieces! To everyone's embarrassment, he even came to church on Sundays dressed in his old, tattered coat. One Sunday, a friend said to him, "You are a respectable tailor. Surely, you should be ashamed of walking around in such a state! Why don't you mend your own coat?" "But what can I do?" replied the tailor. "I have to work all week just to make ends meet. Where am I supposed to find the time to mend my own clothes?" His friend took pity on him and said, "Look, here's £20. Think of me as one of your customers. I'm paying you to mend your own coat." "Fair enough!" said the tailor, happily taking the money. But the following Sunday, his friend was surprised to see him wearing exactly the same old coat. "Hang on a minute!" he said. "Didn't I give you £20 last week to mend your coat? Why haven't you done it?" The tailor replied apologetically, "When I got home and examined my coat, I realised that I would actually lose money if I mended it for just £20!"

Some people will always find an excuse, even when everything they need has been provided! In a way, this funny story helps us understand today's Gospel. The king invites people to a wedding banquet, provides everything for them and expects them to respond to his invitation. Yet one guest arrives without the proper wedding garment. The question for us today is this: **When God invites us, are we ready to respond, or are we always finding excuses?**

In today's first reading, the prophet Isaiah gives us a beautiful picture of God's Kingdom. He describes a great feast with rich food and choice wines, prepared by the Lord for His people. A banquet is a sign of joy, friendship and celebration. It brings people together around one table. Through this image, Isaiah reminds us that God wants to share His life and happiness with us. He wants to wipe away our tears, remove our fears and bring us into the fullness of His salvation.

In the Gospel, Jesus uses the same image of a banquet, this time a royal wedding feast. The king has prepared everything for his son's wedding and sends his servants to call the invited guests. But, to his disappointment, they refuse to come. Some are too busy with their own affairs, while others simply ignore the invitation. What a disappointment it must have been! Everything was ready, the table was laid, and the food was waiting, but the guests could not be bothered to attend. The king, however, does not give up. He sends his servants into the streets to invite everyone they can find, both good and bad. Eventually, the wedding hall is filled with guests. This is the wonderful message of the Gospel: **God's invitation is for everyone.** It does not matter where we come from, what mistakes we have made, or how far we may have wandered from Him. God continues to call us because He loves us.

Every time we come to Mass, we receive that invitation. God welcomes us to listen to His Word, to receive the Eucharist and to renew our friendship with Him. But there is something important we must remember: accepting the invitation is only the beginning. We must also be willing to live according to what God asks of us. This brings us to the second part of the Gospel. The king notices a man who is not wearing a wedding garment. When questioned, the man has nothing to say. Why is this detail so important? The wedding garment is not simply about the clothes we wear when we come to church. It represents the kind of life we are called to live as Christians.

We can come to Mass every Sunday, say our prayers and know all the right words, but the real question is whether our faith makes a difference in our daily lives. Are we patient with our families? Are we kind to our neighbours? Can we forgive someone who has hurt us? Do we make time for those who are lonely, sick or struggling? Are we willing to admit our mistakes and change our ways? These are the things that show whether we are truly wearing the wedding garment of Christ.

We put on the wedding garment whenever we choose forgiveness over resentment, kindness over harshness, generosity over selfishness, and honesty over dishonesty. Our Christian faith should not be something we practise only inside the church. It should be seen in our homes, our workplaces, our conversations and our relationships with others.

My dear brothers and sisters, the story of the tailor reminds us how easily we can find excuses. Sometimes we say, "I am too busy to pray." We may say, "I have no time to help anyone." Perhaps we tell ourselves, "I cannot forgive that person," or "I will change my life one day." Of course, life is busy, and we all have responsibilities. But if we are honest with ourselves, we sometimes make time for the things we want to do while putting off the things that really matter.

The same can happen in our relationship with God. We may accept His invitation, but we do not always give Him the place He deserves in our lives. The Lord does not expect us to become saints overnight. He asks us to take the next step, to make a fresh start and to allow His grace to work in us. Perhaps that means making time for prayer each day. Perhaps it means going to confession, reaching out to someone we have neglected, or making peace with a member of our family. Whatever it may be, let us not keep putting it off. There is no point in waiting for the perfect moment to do what we already know is right.

As we come to the Lord's table today, let us remember that He has invited us to His banquet and continues to offer us His grace. Let us ask ourselves three simple questions: Am I making time for God in my life? Does my faith show in the way I treat other people? And what is one thing I need to change so that I can follow Jesus more faithfully?

The wedding garment is woven from faith, repentance, love, humility and kindness. We put it on day by day through the choices we make and the way we respond to God's grace. Jesus ends the parable with these words: "Many are called, but few are chosen." These words remind us that God's invitation is a gift, but our response matters.

So, my dear friends, let us not be like the tailor who always found an excuse. Let us accept God's invitation with grateful hearts and make a sincere effort to live as true followers of Christ. **The Lord has prepared the banquet, extended the invitation and offered us His grace. Let us respond to Him not only with our words, but with our lives.**

Amen.