LECTIO DIVINA

Living the Word

A WEEK'S JOURNEY WITH THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year A - 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

A companion for encountering Jesus' love in everyday life.



Gospel: Matthew 21: 1-11

You are invited to **read** the Gospel passage slowly, attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.

At that time Jesus began to speak in parables to the chief priests and elders of the people: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come.

Next, he sent some more servants. "Tell those who have been invited," he said, "that I have my banquet all prepared, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, everything is ready. Come to the wedding."

But they were not interested: one went off to his farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his servants, maltreated them and killed them. The king was furious. He dispatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town.

Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone you can find to the wedding." So these servants went out on to the roads and collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests.'

Background to Gospel passage

Where does it happen? Jesus is teaching in the Temple in Jerusalem - the sacred place where the Jewish people believed God's presence dwelt.

When does it happen? This is towards the end of Jesus' public ministry. Calvary is on the horizon.

Who is there? Jesus is speaking to the chief priests and elders of the people - the religious leaders and authorities of the time.

What happens? Parables are not meant to be taken literally. Instead, we are invited to enter into the story, as we do in Lectio Divina, and allow the Spirit to guide us as we recognise something of ourselves in the different characters.

The story begins with a king celebrating the marriage of his son. He invites his guests to share in a joyful feast—a sign of unity, community and communion with God and with one another.

But the invited guests are too preoccupied with their own lives—some with their farms, others with their businesses. They reject the invitation and even turn against the messengers who bring the good news.

So the king sends his messengers out again, this time to the crossroads, inviting everyone they can find.

The feast is open to all, and the wedding hall is filled.

Recognising Stage (Meditate)

- ***Trust the Holy Spirit** at work within you.*
- ***Enter the Gospel:** When have I experienced something similar? What does it remind me of?*
- ***Let the Gospel and your memories speak to each other.***
- ***Notice where you encounter Jesus' loving presence today.***
- *If needed, **use the following prompts to awaken memories.***

"He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come."
Can you remember a time when fear, suspicion or distrust prevented people from coming together and beginning something new?
Or
"Then he sent some more servants… 'My banquet is all prepared.'"
Can you think of people who have offered hope and a new way forward, yet were ignored, rejected or dismissed?
Or
"The servants collected together everyone they could find, good and bad alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests."
Can you remember a time when people from different backgrounds came together and experienced the joy of community, belonging and fellowship?

What memories come back to you? Listen deeply to your own life experience.

Where was it? When was it? Who was there? What happened?

(Some might find it helpful to journal their memory.)

I remember the time when…

Gen.25:16, 'Truly God was in this place and I didn't see it,' until now!

Prayer Response

You are invited to respond in your own words, and where possible, together with some words from the passage. *Let the prayer flow from your recognition of the passage, or any part of it, in life experience. You might find it helpful to journal your prayer.*

Tell your Father how this passage and the memories it has evoked have awakened gratitude for the presence of Jesus in your life and in the world. Heavenly Father, I thank you…

The Gospel is always a call to repentance as well. Share with the Father your sorrow for the times when you, or a community you belong to, have fallen short in living this Gospel. Heavenly Father, I am sorry for...

Ask your Father for the help you need to live the Gospel more fully—in yourself, your family, community, Church and world. Heavenly Father, please give us the help we need to…



You are invited to deepen this prayer experience by resting your heart silently in God's presence and love. The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage may help you on this journey to greater stillness and greater silence, e.g. "the wedding is ready."

An Invitation to Reflect

From your journey with the passage in meditation and prayer, what new insight or understanding have you received about the true meaning of love or some expression of it, into what it means to be fully human, and how God's kingdom is being made present among us today?

Rest in this truth, hold it in prayer and trust that it will bear fruit in your life.

Thought for the week

Humanity is at its best at the table of communion where we move beyond fear and division, welcome one another, and discover the joy of belonging together.

Responsibility

This week I will say 'yes' to God by...



Children

For Primary School Children

Reading: Jesus told a story about a king who invited people to a special wedding feast, but some chose not to come. Jesus reminds us that God invites us to be close to Him and we can choose to say "yes"!

Recognising: Can you think of a person—a parent, a teacher or a friend—who encourages you to say "yes" to God by praying, going to Mass or showing kindness?

Draw or write about this 'Jesus person' and how they help you to say 'yes' to God.



Responding: Father, I thank You for inviting me to be close to You.

Father, I am sorry for the times when I have not said 'yes' to You.

Father, I ask for Your help to listen and choose Your way.

Resting: Remain silent for a few moments with the word 'yes' in your heart.

Reflecting: God invites us to say 'yes' to Him.

Responsibility: **This week I will say 'yes' to God by...**