

LITURGY & LIFE
THE EMMAUS JOURNEY

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Cycle A

A Catholic Update Companion to the Sunday Readings

INVITED TO THE FEAST—CHANGED BY THE INVITATION

Receive the invitation • Come to the feast • Be clothed in Christ • Live as a chosen disciple

1: FOR THE HOMILIST/PCL OR OCIA CO-ORD.: CHRIST SPEAKS - WE LISTEN

Sunday Readings

READING	SCRIPTURE
First Reading	Isaiah 25:6–10a
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6
Second Reading	Philippians 4:12–14, 19–20
Gospel	Matthew 22:1–14 (or 22:1–10)

The Heart of This Sunday's Gospel

EVERYTHING IS READY—COME TO THE FEAST

A king prepares a wedding feast for his son, but the first guests refuse the invitation. Others are gathered from the roads until the hall is filled. Yet one guest enters without a wedding garment. Jesus reveals both the wideness of God's welcome and the seriousness of our response: grace invites us freely, and grace also calls us to become a new people clothed in Christ.

The Liturgical Thread

Isaiah promises a feast for all peoples where God destroys death and wipes away every tear. Psalm 23 presents the Lord as shepherd and host who spreads the table and fills the cup. Paul witnesses that Christ strengthens him in abundance and need. Jesus then announces that everything is ready: the invitation is universal, but those who come must allow grace to clothe them in a new life.

THE MOVEMENT OF THE READINGS

God prepares the feast → All peoples are invited → Christ strengthens those who respond → The welcomed disciple is transformed

Listening With the Heart

Listen

Read Matthew 22:1–14 slowly. Listen for the repeated invitation, notice the excuses of the first guests, and pause at the king's question to the man without a wedding garment.

Reflect

What invitation from God have you postponed? What ordinary concern has become more important than Christ? Do you believe there is a place for you at God's table? What part of your life still needs to be clothed in Christ?

Pray

Thank the Father for inviting you to the wedding feast of His Son. Ask forgiveness for ignored invitations and pray for those who feel unworthy or unwelcome. Ask Christ to clothe you in mercy, holiness, humility, and love.

Rest

Remain quietly with the image of the banquet. The table is prepared and Christ has made a place for you. Rest in gratitude while remaining open to transformation.

Carry This Word

MATTHEW 22:4

“Everything is ready; come to the feast.”

2: FOR THE CATECHIST: THE CHURCH TEACHES - WE LEARN

Catechetical Focus

THE EUCHARISTIC BANQUET AND THE LIFE OF GRACE

Throughout Scripture, the banquet signifies covenant, salvation, communion, and the joy of God's Kingdom. In the Eucharist, Christ is both host and food. He gathers His Church, gives Himself sacramentally, and offers a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. The wedding garment points to the new life of grace: those welcomed by Christ are called to become what they receive.

Catholic Update Resources

PRIMARY CATHOLIC UPDATE

C0310A | Eucharist: Heart of the Church

This Update explains why the Eucharist stands at the heart of Catholic life. Christ gathers His people at the tables of Word and Sacrament, gives His Body and Blood, forms the Church as His Body, and sends the faithful to live the communion they celebrate. It provides the central sacramental lens for the banquet imagery of this Sunday.

SECONDARY CATHOLIC UPDATE

C8710A | How God Invites Us to Grow: Six Stages of Faith Development

This Update helps participants recognize that accepting God's invitation begins an ongoing journey of conversion and maturity. Faith grows as inherited belief becomes personal trust, sacramental participation deepens, questions are integrated, and discipleship becomes missionary. It connects the wedding garment with a life increasingly shaped by Christ.

The Catechist's Companion

Key Teaching

Christ welcomes us to His Eucharistic table so that communion with Him may transform us into faithful disciples.

Session Aim

Help participants recognize the biblical banquet as an image of salvation, understand the Eucharist as the sacramental banquet at the heart of the Church, and see that accepting God's invitation requires ongoing conversion and spiritual growth.

Formation Objectives

- Identify the banquet imagery connecting Isaiah, Psalm 23, and the Gospel.
- Explain why the Eucharist is called a sacred banquet and the heart of the Church.
- Describe the Eucharist as both gift and call.
- Explain the wedding garment as an image of grace and transformed life.
- Name one invitation from God that requires a concrete response.

Integrating This Week's Catholic Updates

C0310A reveals the gift God prepares: Christ gives Himself in the Eucharist and gathers the Church into communion. C8710A explores the response God desires: those who receive Christ are continually invited to grow into a more mature life of faith. The Eucharist without conversion can become habit; faith development without the Eucharist can become self-directed spirituality. Christ nourishes the growth He asks of us.

Expand the Conversation

- What does Isaiah's banquet reveal about God's plan of salvation?
- Why do the invited guests refuse to attend the king's feast?
- How is the Eucharist connected to the heavenly banquet?
- Where is God inviting your faith to mature?

Common Misunderstandings

- The guests' farms and businesses are not evil; the problem is allowing ordinary concerns to displace God.
- The invitation is not earned through prior perfection; both the good and the bad are gathered from the roads.
- The wedding garment does not replace grace; it symbolizes the transformed life grace makes possible.
- The Eucharist is not merely a symbol of community; it is Christ's sacramental presence and saving sacrifice.
- Mature faith does not eliminate questions or struggle; it brings them honestly to God and the Church.

Church References

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1322–1327; 1333–1344; 1382–1405; 1427–1433; 1691–1698; 1996–2001; 2012–2016. Scripture connections: Isaiah 55:1–3; Luke 14:15–24; Luke 22:14–20; John 6:35–58; Romans 13:12–14; Galatians 3:26–28; Revelation 19:6–9.

OCIA Connection

OCIA itself is an invitation. Through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, Christ clothes people in new life and gathers them into His Body. Catechumens may connect the wedding garment with the white baptismal garment; candidates are called to renew and deepen baptismal grace. The invitation is grace, the response is conversion, the feast is communion, and the result is mission.

Catechist's Insight

PASTORAL CARE

Begin with the king's generosity: everything is prepared, the invitation is repeated, and people from every road are welcomed. Only then explore the wedding garment as the integrity of a transformed response. In an OCIA setting, affirm those not yet receiving Communion; their prayer, listening, longing, and preparation are genuine parts of the journey toward full sacramental communion.

Do not let the final scene overshadow the king's abundance. Handle Eucharistic participation pastorally: those not yet receiving Holy Communion should never feel unwanted at Mass. Explain that the Church's discipline safeguards the meaning of full sacramental and ecclesial communion while accompanying each person toward it.

3: FOR THE CANDIDATE/CATECHUMEN: THE DISCIPLE RESPONDS - WE LIVE

Living the Gospel This Week

- What invitation from God have I ignored?
- What excuse do I repeatedly offer?
- Has attending Mass become routine rather than encounter?
- How does receiving Christ affect my treatment of His Body, the Church?
- Where is God inviting my faith to mature?
- Whom can I help feel welcomed at the feast?

Choosing to Be an Intentional Disciple

WHAT IS CHRIST ASKING OF ME TODAY?

What must I leave behind in order to respond wholeheartedly to Christ's invitation?

Intentional discipleship orders every responsibility around Christ's invitation. It may mean protecting Sunday Mass, returning to Reconciliation, ending a pattern incompatible with the Gospel, becoming more attentive in worship, seeking full communion, or welcoming someone who feels excluded. The banquet invitation reveals the center around which everything else must be arranged.

Holy Habit

PREPARING FOR THE SUNDAY FEAST

Before Mass, read the Gospel, ask what invitation Christ is extending, examine whether reconciliation is needed, and arrive early enough for silence. After Mass ask: "How will I become what I have received?" Those not yet receiving Communion may pray: "Lord Jesus, deepen my desire for full communion and prepare my whole life to receive You."

Faith Into Practice

- Attend Sunday Mass without allowing another activity to displace it.
- Arrive early and remain briefly afterward in thanksgiving.
- Invite someone to Mass or a parish event.
- Welcome a person who appears alone at church.
- Return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Share a meal with someone who might otherwise be alone.
- Take one concrete step toward greater maturity in faith.

Personal Reflection

Have I merely entered the banquet hall, or am I allowing Christ to clothe me in a new life? What would it look like to wear His mercy, humility, holiness, and love this week?

4: FOR THE SPONSOR: THE CHURCH SENDS - WE WITNESS

Sponsor's Path of Accompaniment

Share Your Faith	Share about a time when Christ's invitation became more personal and began to change your priorities or your understanding of the Eucharist.
Walk Together	Ask: "Where do you sense Christ inviting you to grow?" Listen for what draws the participant toward the Eucharist and what still feels difficult.
Pray Together	Read Isaiah 25:6–9. Thank the Father for preparing the feast, and ask Christ to deepen your hunger for communion and clothe you in His life.
Experience the Church	Attend Mass together with special attention to the gathering, the tables of Word and Eucharist, the invitation to Communion, and the sending forth.
Continue the Journey	Each person names one area of spiritual growth and chooses one manageable next step before the next conversation.

Faith at Home

Create a household "Invitation Table." During one family meal, place an empty chair or an additional place setting at the table. Ask who might feel forgotten or excluded and how your household can reflect God's generous invitation. Choose one person or household to invite for a meal, contact, assist with food, or remember in prayer. Conclude: "Lord Jesus, as You welcome us to Your table, teach us to make room for others."

Parish Life

Consider how the parish communicates God's invitation. Are newcomers welcomed, catechumens supported, the poor honored, people with disabilities able to participate, and inactive Catholics invited to return? Choose one concrete action that makes the parish's welcome more visible and its Eucharistic life more fruitful.

Go Forth This Week

Come gratefully to Christ's feast, and leave clothed in His love for the life of the world.

Prayer for the Week

Loving Father, You have prepared the feast and invited me through Your Son. You call me not because I am perfect, but because Your mercy is generous. Forgive the invitations I have ignored and the lesser things I have allowed to take Your place. Deepen my hunger for Christ in the Eucharist. Clothe me in His compassion, humility, holiness, and love. Teach me to become what I receive: a member of

Christ's Body, a servant of communion, and a witness to Your Kingdom. Lead me toward the eternal banquet where every tear is wiped away and death is destroyed forever. Amen.

Emmaus Insight

God's invitation becomes complete in us when the grace that welcomes us also transforms us.