

28th Sunday in the Ordinary Time (A)
Servants of the Little Way

Isa. 25:6-10; Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4,5,6; Phil. 4:12-14,19-20; Matt. 22:1-14

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I have a vision for our parish: let's stop using the word "volunteer." That word can make it seem like someone is just a part-time helper or doesn't really belong. In the Kingdom of God that Jesus spoke about, there are no volunteers. We are all kamaaina, part of one family. I believe everyone who serves at the Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa should be called a "Servant of the Little Way." We are all friends of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, who shows us how to do even small things with great love.

The responsorial psalm captures the spirit of a "Servant of the Little Way": "I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life" (Ps. 23). The house of the Lord is where we encounter God in the Church, celebrate Mass, and spend time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It is more than a building; it is a place of spiritual encounter and communion where we pray both alone and with others. Here, our souls find rest, we seek comfort and answers, our spirits are lifted, and our faith grows.

In the end, it is about having faith and trusting that God is with us wherever we are and in every situation. St. Paul expresses a similar outlook in his letter to the Philippians. He says he has learned to live with plenty or with little, whether well fed or hungry, because he has found the secret to life by giving himself completely to Jesus Christ (cf. Phil. 4:12-13).

Today's readings are meant to inspire us and encourage us to live in the house of the Lord as Servants of the Little Way.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells a story about a king who prepares a wedding banquet for his son and invites people to celebrate. Everything was ready: the place, decorations, food, and invitations. But when the time came, the guests did not show up (cf. Matt. 22:3). Imagine planning a big luau with all kinds of food like pupus, poke, lechon, kalua pork, pancit, puleho steak, and more, but no one comes. Seeing empty seats would be painful.

What made it even more disappointing was that each guest had an excuse. One went to his farm, another to his business (cf. Matt. 22:5). There is nothing wrong with these things, but they were too busy to accept the invitation. This message still matters to us today. We make excuses, too. We work, care for our families, pay bills, attend meetings, and handle daily challenges. Often, the first thing we reach for in the morning is our cellphone, not God. Before we greet the Lord, we may already have checked our messages and the news. The day goes by quickly, and we fill it with many things. We are just busy.

God does not give up on us easily. He keeps reaching out in many ways, sometimes when we least expect it. When we are distracted, God invites us, "Come and sit quietly with Me." In hard times, God says, "Come. You do not have to carry everything alone." God calls us: "Come to Mass. Return to prayer. Return to confession." The Gospel shows that when the first guests refused, the king sent his servants out again and again to invite everyone. This means God's table is open to sinners like us. We do not have to be perfect before coming to God. Some people say, "Father, I will return to church when I am ready; I have fixed my life." But it is important to come first and let God help you. The Church is more like a hospital than a museum for saints. It is a home for those seeking healing and a place for sinners who want to grow.

However, God's invitation also entails responsibility. When a man attended the feast without a wedding garment, he was left speechless. Wearing the appropriate attire at a wedding banquet symbolizes our life of faith. At baptism, we received a white garment, signifying our dignity as children of God, temples of the Holy Spirit, and members of the Body of Christ. This is a profound honor, but it also carries great responsibility. Clothed with Christ, we begin our journey toward becoming more like Him. We are all saints in the making.

Jesus teaches us that just showing up is not enough. We need to let God change us. If we pray every day but speak harshly to our families or others, something is not right. If we go to Mass but act dishonestly during the week, something is wrong. If we receive Holy Communion but do not forgive, or pray the Rosary but unfairly criticize others online, something is off. With God's grace, prayer slowly changes our lives, but this takes time.

The main question is not just "Did I attend Mass?" but also "Is receiving Jesus in the Holy Eucharist making me a better person?" Am I becoming more loving, forgiving, patient, honest, or generous? Hopefully, we do not wait until the last moment to regret not having lived in the house of the Lord.

May the way we live today help us be ready to hear the Lord say, "Come. Everything is ready. There is a place at My table for you." Let's live in this house of the Lord not as volunteers, but as Servants of the Little Way.

May the spirit of the Servant of the Little Way, as described in the responsorial psalm, live in our hearts now and always: "I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life" (Ps. 23).

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