

Theme: **PARTYING**

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time!

31 August 2025

This 22nd Sunday in Ordinary time whispers a gentle reminder to our souls, a call to awaken to the transformative power of humility, service, and love that beats at the very heart of Jesus' teachings. As we gather around the table, we are enveloped in the warmth of community, and our hearts are nudged to live out these values in the intricate dance of our lives. Imagine if every gesture, every word, and every action was guided by the tender touch of love and compassion.

Let's revisit the tender story of a parish community that came together at Mass, their hearts overflowing with the spirit of unity and love. They hosted a simple yet profound lunch in the parish hall, where tables were arranged with care, radiating warmth and genuine hospitality. Everyone hurried to sit near the parish priest, drawn to his warmth and guidance, while a quiet man, who had just returned from working abroad, chose a seat at the far corner, his humility and generosity shining like a beacon in the silence. When the parish priest stood to give thanks, his eyes landed on this man, and with a warm smile, he invited him forward, honoring his selfless contributions to the parish and the poor. Tears welled up in the eyes of those present as they witnessed the beauty of humility and generosity, values that are cherished in the eyes of God.

In the gospels, Jesus is often found sharing meals with people from all walks of life - friends, tax collectors, sinners and the rich. He does this with a purpose: **TO BRING THE MESSAGE OF THE KINGDOM TO EVERY CORNER OF SOCIETY, TO EVERY HEART THAT BEATS WITH LONGING.** In the Gospel reading, we see Jesus' dining in the house of a prominent Pharisee (Lk 14:1, 7-14), offering lessons both to the guests and the host, reminding us that in the simple act of sharing a meal, we can build bridges of understanding and deepen our sense of community. *Can we imagine the look in Jesus' eyes as he gazed upon the faces of those around him, his heart overflowing with love and compassion?*

To the guest, Jesus offers his gentle yet profound advice: "**When you're invited to a wedding banquet, don't seek the place of honor.**" Instead, take the lowest place, and let the host invite you to a higher place. This teaching runs counter to the world's wisdom, where we're often encouraged to seek recognition and status. Yet, Jesus calls us to a

different path - a path of humility, where service and love become the measures of our worth. As we walk this path, may our hearts be filled with the peace that comes from serving others, and may our actions be a reflection of the love that Jesus has shown us. In the wedding feast of the kingdom, it's the humble heart that will be exalted. Jesus himself is the embodiment of this humility, coming not to be served but to serve. A loving mother, who puts the needs of others before his own, is a beautiful reflection of this selfless love. As we follow Jesus' example, we're invited to cultivate a spirit of compassion and selflessness, allowing these values to shape our lives and our relationships. May we be blessed with the ability to see the face of Jesus in every person we meet, and may our actions be guided by the love and compassion that he has shown us.

Jesus also offers guidance to the host: **"When you hold a feast, don't invite those who can repay you. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind."** For Jesus, these are the one who occupy the first place in his kingdom. This teaching challenges us to look beyond our circles of comfort and to extend our hands in love and kindness to those who need it most. As we do so, may we experience the joy that comes from serving others, and may our hearts be filled with the love and compassion that Jesus has shown us.

As we reflect *on* our own gatherings and celebrations, we might ask ourselves: Whom do we invite to our tables? Do we extend our hospitality to those who can offer us something in return, or do we reach out to those who are often left on the margins? Jesus reminds us that there's a special blessing in inviting those who cannot repay us - a blessing that touches the heart of God's kingdom. May our tables be a reflection of God's love and compassion, and may our actions be guided by the desire to serve and love others.

How profound are the words of Gandhi when he said, **"The earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not enough for every man's greed."** Jesus calls us to live differently, to live with hearts that are open, generous and humble. May we strive to follow his teachings, embracing a life of love, service and humility. And may our actions be a source of hope and joy to all those around us. As we journey on this path, may we be filled with the peace that comes from serving others, and may our hearts be overflowing with the love and compassion that Jesus has shown us. May our lives be a testament to the transformative power of love and service, and may we bring hope and joy to a world that so desperately needs it.

As we conclude our reflection, let us hold in our hearts the wisdom of Jesus' teachings. May we be inspired to live with great humility, to serve with love, and to extend our hands in kindness to all, especially to those who are in need. In doing so, we not only transform our own lives but also bring light and hope to the world around us.

