

TWENTY EIGHT SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (10/11-12/2008)

Isaiah 25/6-10, Psalm 23, Philippians 4/12-20, Matthew 22/1-14

I had hoped that I might be able to present a celebratory package this week; the Cubs, you see, were to have moved on in the playoffs.

Instead of moving on, they moved out.

Alas, so it goes. Wait till... (I can't write it down!)

At any rate, *Isaiah* today gives us something to hope for; we learn what God has in store for His people who are faithful to the covenant. "*On this mountain, the Lord of Hosts will provide for all people, a feast of rich food and choice wines...On this mountain He will destroy the veil that veils all peoples...He will destroy death forever.*"

It's not a sop for all our woes, but rather a way of speaking about the life to come.

Some take it literally and picture themselves sitting around a banquet table enjoying fine wines and unending platters of luscious food, with God presiding like a benevolent caterer.

That's comforting, but I suspect the reality will be far different and far more fulfilling.

In the Gospel, Jesus puts forth another parable, this one about a dinner party given to honor a just-married bride and groom.

The father of the groom, apparently a king and thus a man with some authority, throws a party to celebrate his son's wedding; for some reason, his invitation is not well received.

People ignore the invite or reject it, and some even seriously mistreat the innocent messengers.

The king reacts with anger and sends his army to wipe out the murderers and destroy their city.

Some preparation for a wedding feast, right?

We hear of people in our days who ignore or reject invitations, but murdering the post man who brings the invite? Not very nice!

The king has a party prepared with food and wine, but with no prospect of guests to share in it.

Our thoughts go back to the opening reading from *Isaiah* today.

God's banquet atop the mountain will be a celebratory affair to be sure, and no one in his right mind will reject that invitation. Or at least we hope not.

You can see where this parable is going.

In many ways, it echoes the same message we have been hearing in Jesus' previous parables.

When the Kingdom comes into our lives, we have to make decisions and provide a response to the Presence of God.

Over the past few weeks, in the Gospel readings, we have been treated to a variety of such responses – some day laborers, feeling they have been mistreated, have grumbled and complained; sons have said "yes" and "no" and then changed their minds; workers in the vineyard have revolted and committed mayhem;.

Jesus points out what happens when people encounter the Lord.

It's not always with open hearts and arms.

And that's a pity, since God so wants us to be with Him, celebrating the Kingdom with reckless abandon, if you will.

Examine your own response to the Lord's invitation.

May it be positive and affirming: "I'll be there with bells on, Lord."