TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A crisis involving someone we love can make us willing to seek help in ways we never imagined. We may arrive at a family recovery meeting exhausted from trying to manage what we cannot control. At first, simply finding people who understand can feel like relief. Over time, however, recovery asks for more than a place to vent or gather information. We are invited into a different way of living and loving.

Sunday's gospel gives us the image of a king preparing a wedding feast for his son (Matthew 22:1–14). The first guests refuse the invitation, so the king sends his servants into the streets to gather *"all they found, bad and good alike"* until the hall is filled (Matthew 22:10). The invitation is generous. People are welcomed who never expected to be included.

Family recovery can feel like that. We often come because another person's addiction or unhealthy behavior has disrupted life. We may think the meeting is primarily about learning how to help them. Then we discover that God has invited us too. Our own fear, resentment, control, and exhaustion need attention. We do not have to wait for someone else to become willing before beginning our own recovery.

Jesus then introduces the guest without a wedding garment. The point is not that we must make ourselves worthy before entering the feast. Grace welcomes us as we are, but it also calls us to respond. Family recovery asks us to become willing to live differently, even when the person we love has not changed.

That can mean releasing patterns that once felt necessary. We may stop rescuing someone from consequences or begin speaking more honestly about what we can and cannot accept. At first, these changes can feel uncomfortable because they challenge the idea that love means keeping everything together. Yet cooperation with grace gradually teaches us that healthy love does not require control.

Saint Paul speaks to another part of this journey in the second reading. He says, *"I know how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance"* (Philippians 4:12). Then he adds, *"I can do all things in him who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13). His strength is not the power to make circumstances turn out as he wishes. It is the ability to remain rooted in Christ whether life feels settled or uncertain.

That is a valuable lesson for family recovery. When a loved one is doing poorly, fear can pull us back toward old habits of monitoring and overfunctioning. When things improve, we may abandon the practices that helped restore our peace. Recovery asks us to remain faithful in both circumstances.

Psalm 23 offers a quiet reminder: *"You spread the table before me"* (Psalm 23:5). God is still providing for us, even when another person's choices remain beyond our control. His grace is not dependent on whether the family situation resolves according to our timetable.

We love the person who is struggling, but their choices and recovery remain their own. We are not meant to carry consequences that belong to them. We can support them and speak honestly about what we see while setting boundaries that protect what God has entrusted to us. What we cannot do is take over another person's will.

God is inviting us into greater freedom now. As we continue showing up with a willing heart, He teaches us how to love without losing ourselves and how to remain grounded in Christ no matter what another person chooses.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where are you still waiting for someone else to change before becoming willing to work on your own recovery?
- What has helped you respond to someone you love with greater peace and freedom, even when their choices have not changed?
- How might God be inviting you to love someone more freely while allowing their choices to remain their responsibility?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Isaiah 25:6–10a
RESP. PS. Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6
SECOND READING Philippians 4:12–14, 19–20
GOSPEL Matthew 22:1–14

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