

Homily Helps

The Wedding Feast • Matthew 22:1-14

RESPECT LIFE MONTH • WEEK 2

October 11, 2026: Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings (Lectionary: 142)
First Reading: Isaiah 25:6-10a
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23
Second Reading: Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20
Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14 or 22:1-10

Core preaching lens

God's desire is to gather. The banquet reveals a love that reaches beyond the expected guests and calls every person into communion. Respect Life Month asks whether our communities mirror that generous welcome.

THE INVITATION REVEALS GOD-GIVEN DIGNITY

- The king's invitation extends far beyond the original guests. The servants gather "all they found, bad and good alike." God's kingdom is not reserved for the powerful, productive, healthy, or successful.
- Every person is invited because every person possesses God-given dignity. No human life is expendable or unworthy of God's love.
- During Respect Life Month, we remember those our culture easily overlooks: the child in the womb, the elderly person facing illness, the person with disabilities, the migrant, the poor, and the forgotten.
- Our value does not come from what we contribute. It comes first from being created, loved, and called by God.

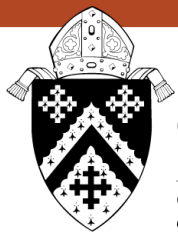
Preaching bridge: The Gospel invites the parish to ask not simply, "Who belongs here?" but "Whom is God asking us to notice, welcome, and protect?"

THE TRAGEDY IS THE REFUSAL

- The tragedy of the parable is not that the invitation is narrow, but that many refuse it. They are absorbed in farms, businesses, comfort, and self-interest.
- Our culture can be similarly distracted. We may overlook the vulnerable not because we consciously reject their dignity, but because other concerns feel more urgent or convenient.
- Respect for life begins by receiving God's invitation: to love him, to be transformed by grace, and to see every person as someone called to the same heavenly feast.
- The wedding garment points toward conversion and discipleship. God's welcome is freely given, yet grace calls forth a life marked by justice, mercy, truth, and love.

KEY TAKEAWAY

"The hall was filled with guests." God's desire is not to exclude but to gather. We imitate that generous love when no one is forgotten, discarded, or exploited.



Office for
Human Life
Catholic Diocese
of Cleveland

Homily Helps

Dignity Lived • Dignity Defended

RESPECT LIFE MONTH • WEEK 2

Connecting Moral Dignity and Human Trafficking

“Every person is invited to God's banquet because every person possesses God-given dignity. But this Gospel also reminds us that dignity is something we are called to live. Our daily choices either reveal or obscure the truth that we are God's beloved sons and daughters.”

MORAL DIGNITY: FREEDOM ORDERED TO LOVE

- The king respects the freedom of those invited. Some accept; others reject. Freedom is a gift meant for truth, love, and self-giving.
- Our fundamental dignity as persons can never be erased. Moral dignity concerns how faithfully our choices correspond to the good. We live worthily when freedom becomes service; sin wounds this correspondence.
- The guests who choose farms and businesses over the banquet illustrate freedom narrowed by self-interest and indifference.
- The wedding garment suggests transformation. Affirming human worth is essential, but discipleship also asks us to become people of justice, mercy, truth, and love.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE ANTI-BANQUET

- God's kingdom is marked by welcome, freedom, communion, and joy. Trafficking thrives through isolation, coercion, exploitation, and profit.
- Trafficking reduces a person to a commodity. The Gospel recognizes each person as a beloved son or daughter, worthy of welcome and protection.
- Traffickers misuse freedom to exploit. Yet neither victims nor perpetrators lose their fundamental human dignity. Survivors deserve protection and healing; perpetrators remain called to repentance and conversion.
- The Church is sent into the streets: to notice vulnerability, accompany survivors, strengthen protective communities, and defend those whose dignity is under attack.

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

- Will we use freedom to serve or exploit?
- To protect the vulnerable or ignore them?
- To welcome others as guests at God's banquet or treat them as obstacles to our interests?

PASTORAL INVITATION

Help build a culture where every person is welcomed as a guest at God's table - never treated as a commodity, inconvenience, or object for use.