**Twenty – Seven Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Theme: “Go and Invite Everyone to the banquet” (Mt. 22:9)**

This is the theme chosen by Pope Francis for the month of October. This theme emphasizes two core aspects:

**01. Going out**: Mission work involves going out into the world, reaching out to those who have not heard the Gospel, and inviting them to experience God’s love. It’s a call to be active and engaged in spreading the faith.

**02. Inviting Everyone**: The invitation is universal, reflecting God’s love for all. It calls on us to welcome everyone to the feast of the Eucharist and the ultimate banquet in the Kingdom of God.

We have just heard words which speak to us of the enduring bond arising between a man and a woman in marriage. Catholics appreciate this bond in a special way because we recognize it as the sign of a **relationship** uniquely open to the support and assistance of God’s grace. Those here today who have experienced marriage themselves…or who are considering entering into the vocation of marriage at some point in the future…will know the joy which this kind of personal commitment can bring.

Even for people who are not bound to another person in marriage, the readings for today’s Mass still teach us about our relationships. Because, at heart, Jesus calls all of us into relationships requiring faithfulness, not just in marriage. And more: using the language of the Gospel, faithfulness is not just a call, it is **a command**. Jesus commands us to be faithful.

But faithful to what? Maybe the better way to asking this question is as “**faithful to whom?”**

 In Mark’s Gospel Jesus refers back to the same chapters of Genesis from which we heard a few lines read earlier. In those chapters from the book of Genesis we witness many important **“firsts**”. These include the first moments of time at the beginning of the universe; the creation of the very first forms of life to exists on earth; the first experiences of humankind in the story of Adam and Eve, man and woman. At the beginning of Genesis, we appreciate how God creates everything…the world, life, human beings…in order, it seems, to be able to be in relationship with something other than himself. So, if Jesus is commanding us to be faithful, in an important sense he is saying first we need to be faithful to **God**, **to the creator**. In a deeply mysterious way, we are created to be in **relationship with God.**

But more, human beings who are created in diversity as male and female, placed in the Garden of Eden to work together to continue the goodness of the world, are also created to be in relationship with **other peopl**e. So, while we are called to be faithful to God we are also **commanded** to be faithful to each other.

This is well known in the work of the Missions. In a profound way, missionaries may have given up the limited bonds of marriage and family in order to be hospitable to and inviting of the **human and spiritual needs** of other people…in particular those who experience most acute human and spiritual needs in the developing world. But still, whether for the married couple or for the missionary, **fidelity lived** **well** is a sign of **grace** ... a demonstration of God’s loving, hospitable involvement in the world that he has created.

As we move from reflecting on the words of scripture to receiving the grace of the Eucharist into our bodies and souls let us give thanks to God for who and what he has given to us, the very people and relationships to which we have been called to be faithful.