A reading FROM THE book of isaiah

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.
He will swallow up death for ever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.
It will be said on that day,
'Behold, this is our God;
we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'
For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain.

The word of the Lord

The response to the psalm is

In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending.
The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me;
he revives my soul.

In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending.

He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.
Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.

Your crook and your staff will give me comfort.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending.

You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending.

In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending.

A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE PHILLIPPIANS

Brothers and Sisters: I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The word of the Lord

The Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

enlighten the eyes of our hearts,

so that we may know the hope to which he has called us.

Alleluia.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to matthew

At that time: Jesus again spoke to the chief priests and the elders of the people, in parables, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again, he sent other servants, saying, “Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.’” But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, “The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.” And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

‘But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?” And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” For many are called, but few are chosen.’

Reflection on the readings

The Roman empire and Parthia to the East were in a state of tension with Israel in the middle. An attempt to end the war by an arranged marriage may have led to diplomats being arrested and killed even perhaps a member of the Emperor’s family. Known to Jesus’ people they would have seen the resemblance. But the Roman idea of peace was to kill and destroy any who threatened them, even a charismatic preacher who spoke only of peace.

Jesus pointed out his message to the chief priests, with their control of worship, that holy men and prophets have come to tell them to reform but had been rejected. He had said before “Those who called ‘Lord, Lord” cannot expect God to do what they want, if they do not follow the will of God.

The oddity is the man without a wedding garment, why would he be thrown out? Perhaps he had shown no respect in his attitude but only came along for

what he could get at the meal with no commitment. Like the man with one talent in another parable, he did nothing wrong but showed no respect for the one who had given him this opportunity.

Each of us who accept Christ in our hearts are aware of a call to love God in prayer, worship and trust as well as an unselfish respect for others. We show God our attitude is manifested in what we do, pray and say.

From time to time, I follow the Jesuit practice called the “examen”, in true humility to know myself, the good within me that does good and the faults and weakness that I can address and ask for God’s help, knowing that an acknowledged weakness can develop and grow into something better in what I do and what I choose not to do.

What did I do badly, or ‘failed to do’ through my fault. This encourages me to go on and show God what I can do. When I did well, I can make that a platform for more good.

There’s a lovely son in My Fair lady where the poor heroine has become a lady and has a rather wet stalker and tells him “Show me”