

28th Sunday per Annum - A
Isaiah 25:6-10a;
Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20;
Matthew 22:1-14
Little Flower - 10/15/17

My Brothers and Sisters,

Both in the Old Testament and in the Gospels, a primary image for the kingdom of God is a banquet. In today's first reading, Isaiah prophesied that on the holy mountain God would provide "*for all peoples a feast of rich food and choice wines...*" Likewise, in the New Testament, Jesus' favorite image for the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven was a banquet. To understand the image, we have to understand that for the Jews of Jesus' time, meals were sacred times of intimacy with God and others. This is why Jewish worship took place primarily in the context of meals: the weekly Sabbath supper and the annual Passover Seder Supper.

At the Last Supper, Jesus gave us the gift of the Eucharist. Each and every time we celebrate Eucharist, we look forward to and anticipate the heavenly banquet. Each and every time we celebrate Eucharist, we deepen our union with God and our communion with one another and with the Communion of Saints. At funerals, I frequently make the point that the person who died will always be present to us in spirit but will never be more present than each and every time we celebrate Eucharist.

Today, however, I want to focus not on the celebration of the Eucharist or the reception of Holy Communion but on perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. November 1st will be the 25th anniversary of our perpetual adoration chapel. As most of you know, after an incident in church on August 12th, we closed the chapel until September 25th so that we could increase security in church. However, it has become clear in recent months that we do not currently have enough adorers to have perpetual adoration with the Blessed Sacrament exposed. Therefore, when we re-opened the chapel, we only re-opened it from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. daily.

We would like once again to offer perpetual adoration. Therefore, this weekend or next weekend the priests in our *Connected in the Spirit* cohort are inviting their parishioners to sign up to become adorers. Our perpetual adoration chapel is not just Little Flower's perpetual adoration chapel. It is the perpetual adoration chapel for the entire East Deanery.

Adorers will testify that praying before the Blessed Sacrament brings them an indescribable closeness to God. The chapel becomes a quiet place where the cares of the world melt away for a while. Multiple saints prayed before the Blessed Sacrament, notably St. John Paul II & St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta. I would just like to share the stories of two adorers with you.

One couple said that adoration helped them through the long-term mental illness of their son and ultimately his death. They do not know how either of them would have held up without their chapel time. Another adorer said that when her son was in Riley Hospital for an extended period, a friend asked how she was able to keep her holy hour. She replied that her holy hour was the reason she could continue her vigil with her son at the hospital. Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament not only gives honor and glory to God, but it also brings incredible gifts to those who adore.

You can become involved in adoration in several ways. You can choose to have an assigned hour each week, or you can become a substitute adorer, or you can visit the chapel whenever you choose. While in the chapel, you can pray, meditate, or read appropriate material, such as the Bible, liturgical writings, or lives of the saints.

My brothers and sisters, after Mass today, there will be sign-up sheets in the back of church for those who might wish to have an assigned hour each week or become a substitute adorer. Also, there will be a representative from the chapel ministry to answer your questions. If you sign up, Bobbie Lawless, our chapel coordinator, will call you to discuss how you wish to be involved.