

HOMILY-22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME-YEAR C

Based on St Luke 14: 1, 7-14 | by Rt Rev'd Dr Geoffrey S Robinson CJ

May I speak in the Name of God, who is +Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**



I don't know about you, but in recent times I have noticed how society has changed compared with how it was when I was growing up. It seems to me that many people have become so sad, and it is a fact that more people now seem to suffer from depression.

This often results in rising suicidal deaths from people who have turned to using drugs, alcohol, and from feelings of despair. But perhaps other troubling statistics show that since the 1990's the people who don't have many close friends has increased fourfold.

Furthermore, young people have persistently reported feelings of sadness or hopelessness in their lives, possibly linked to single parent families or unmarried parents – and it is a fact that more than half of the population record that no one knows them well.

When considering those statistics, I found today's gospel passage an interesting one. Of course, we first of all should try to attempt to understand the context of this scripture in the hope that it will deepen our appreciation of its message.

Jesus was dining at the house of a prominent Pharisee and was aware of the discussions surrounding status and honour

among the dinner guests who were there. The gathering was stashed with notable guests and so as usual Jesus took the opportunity to share some truths with everyone about one's own self-esteem and humility.

In Jesus' time, meals were social events that reflected a person's standing in society. Seating arrangements often indicated rank—those in the best positions were seen as more important. So, by addressing this topic directly, Jesus challenged the cultural norms of valuing status in His day.

So, turning to his host at dinner He focused on the Kingdom values that promote humility and service to others by saying, “When you put on a luncheon or a banquet, don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbours. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward.

Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you.”

Much of life today involves the expectation of repayment for the things we do - I'll do this for you, and you'll do something for me.

Some relationships are built on doing things for each other, which is not necessarily bad, but still the expectation of repayment can exist even though it may not be stated explicitly.

Unfortunately, we inhabit a society in which people are no longer trained in how to treat others with kindness and

consideration. Our society has become one in which people feel licensed to give their selfishness free rein.

However, Jesus wants us to follow him into a more redemptive purpose in our personal relationships. He challenges us today, to bless, benefit, and befriend those who cannot repay us for our interest, concern, and kindness.

I began by saying that I found today's gospel passage an interesting one, but more than that, I believe it is a fundamental aspect of our existence, which should guide the rhythm of our days, weeks, and years. It should shape the way we live and form the decisions we make to help our fellow human beings. Perhaps then, it will even make our society and the world in which we live a better place.

Our actions and the way in which we live, matter to God –
and God promises to remember!

Amen.