



a Kendall Hunt Company

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Isaiah 25:6-10

Psalm 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

Matthew 22:1-14 [or (short form) 22:1-10]

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Is there a particular reading that appeals to you? Is there a word or image that engages you?

RCL Benziger
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Read the following **Word in Liturgy** and **Catholic Doctrine** sections. Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need.

The Word In Liturgy

The particular selection of Isaiah that we read today has served for countless generations as a classic expression of the eschatological banquet motif, a set of images used time and again to evoke the sum of all blessings that God's people will experience on the last day, the day of vindication from the Lord. The setting for the banquet is the mountain, a place that always carries in Jewish literature symbolic connotations of encounter with the divine. The feast is lavish, and the blessings of the table are incredibly wonderful ("he will destroy death forever," v. 7).

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Early Christians quickly interpreted passages such as the present one as prefiguring their gatherings for the agape feast on the Lord's Day. Their highly developed eschatological sense led them to identify Sunday, the day of the Lord's resurrection, as the "eighth day of creation," the long-awaited "Day of the Lord," on which judgment of evildoers and salvation for the faithful would finally be accomplished.

Jesus' table fellowship with sinners was one of the defining characteristics of his public ministry of healing and reconciliation. He was aware of and even called attention to these meals as symbolic expressions ("sacraments") of the advent of God's reign, made available in his person and ministry. Jesus' parables often used the meal as metaphor to convey some bigger truth of the kingdom, and it is little wonder that the early Christian community continued to tell their stories of Jesus with a heavy emphasis on the symbolic importance of the table. Matthew's allegorizing hand is evident in his version of today's parable, which identifies the sending of servants first with the preaching of the prophets, secondly with the apostolic mission to Israel (along with the destruction of Jerusalem as the consequence of their refusal), and, finally, with the Church's mission to the Gentiles. Also, the work of Matthew is the juxtaposition of a second parable (vv. 11-14, [long form of the reading]), clearly aimed at warning members of his own community who were present at the banquet (i.e., participated in Christian Eucharist), but who lacked behaviors expected of the baptized. (Some commentators feel the wedding garment is probably an allusion to the white robe of baptism.) Literature such as this helps us to appreciate the importance that the early Christian community ascribed to participation in the Eucharist on the Lord's Day, even when such participation was at the risk of one's life.

Catholic Doctrine

Keep Holy the Lord's Day

The Lord's Day refers to Sunday, the first day of the week. According to scripture, Sunday is the day when Christ rose from the dead (Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, and John 20:1). On this day, everything changed, in God, for the better. Thus, this day, Sunday, is the day the Lord has made. On this day, we believers rejoice.

In reflecting on the liturgical year, the Second Vatican Council declared, "By a tradition handed down from the apostles, which took its origin from the very day of Christ's

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resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day, which day is appropriately called the Lord's Day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together in one place. They should listen to the word of God and take part in the Eucharist, thus calling to mind the passion, resurrection, and the glory of the Lord Jesus, and giving thanks to God who 'has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, unto a living hope' (1 Peter 1:3). The Lord's Day is the original feast day, and it should be proposed to the faithful and taught to them so that it may become in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work. Other celebrations, unless they be truly of the greatest importance, shall not have precedence over Sunday, which is the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year" (SC 106).

The third commandment of the Decalogue enjoins us to observe and keep holy the Sabbath. Six days were set aside for work, but the seventh day was for rest, just as God rested after having created the world. The third commandment, of course, refers to the Jewish Sabbath. But for us Christians, Sunday fulfills the injunction of the third commandment, for in Christ the old law is made complete and Sunday is associated with Christ because of his resurrection on the first day of the week (CCC 2175). St. Ignatius of Antioch (d. 107) wrote, "Those who live according to the old order of things have come to a new hope, no longer keeping the Sabbath, but the Lord's Day, in which our life is blessed by him and by his death" (Epistula ad Magnesios 9, 1 AFII/2, 128-30; SCh 10, 88).

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From the very beginnings of the Church, the community of believers gathered on Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist, the sacrament that renews our contact with the paschal mystery and which communicates and effects life within the Church (CCC 2177) and makes us one body, one blood. Thus, the Catholic Church understands that it is necessary for believers to gather on this day, that is, to leave their homes (where they can pray as a family or as an individual) and come together to raise their minds, their hearts, and their voices in praise of the God who has made them one, uniting them in the sacrifice of Jesus. St. John Chrysostom (d. 407) preached: "You cannot pray at home as at church, where there is a great multitude, where exclamations are cried out to God as from one great heart, and where there is something more: the union of minds, the accord of souls, the bond of charity, the prayers of the priests" (De incomprehensibili 3, 6: PG 48, 725D).

The great significance of this day, Sunday, is shown in the precepts of the Church, for it is specified that on Sundays and the other holy days the faithful are bound to participate in the

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Mass except in the case of sickness or the care of the sick and infants (CCC 2181 and CIC 1247). This obligation is fulfilled by either participating at Mass during the day on Sunday or on the evening before, at a vigil Mass (in other words, Sunday as a liturgical celebration commences for us on Saturday evening and concludes at sundown on Sunday itself—reflecting our Jewish heritage).

Sunday, the Lord's Day, is the festival day when our passover in Christ from death and sin to new life and grace is celebrated. For us believers it is a markedly communal day, a day when we draw together with one voice and heart to praise the Son who has risen in our lives and illumines us with true beauty and love.

