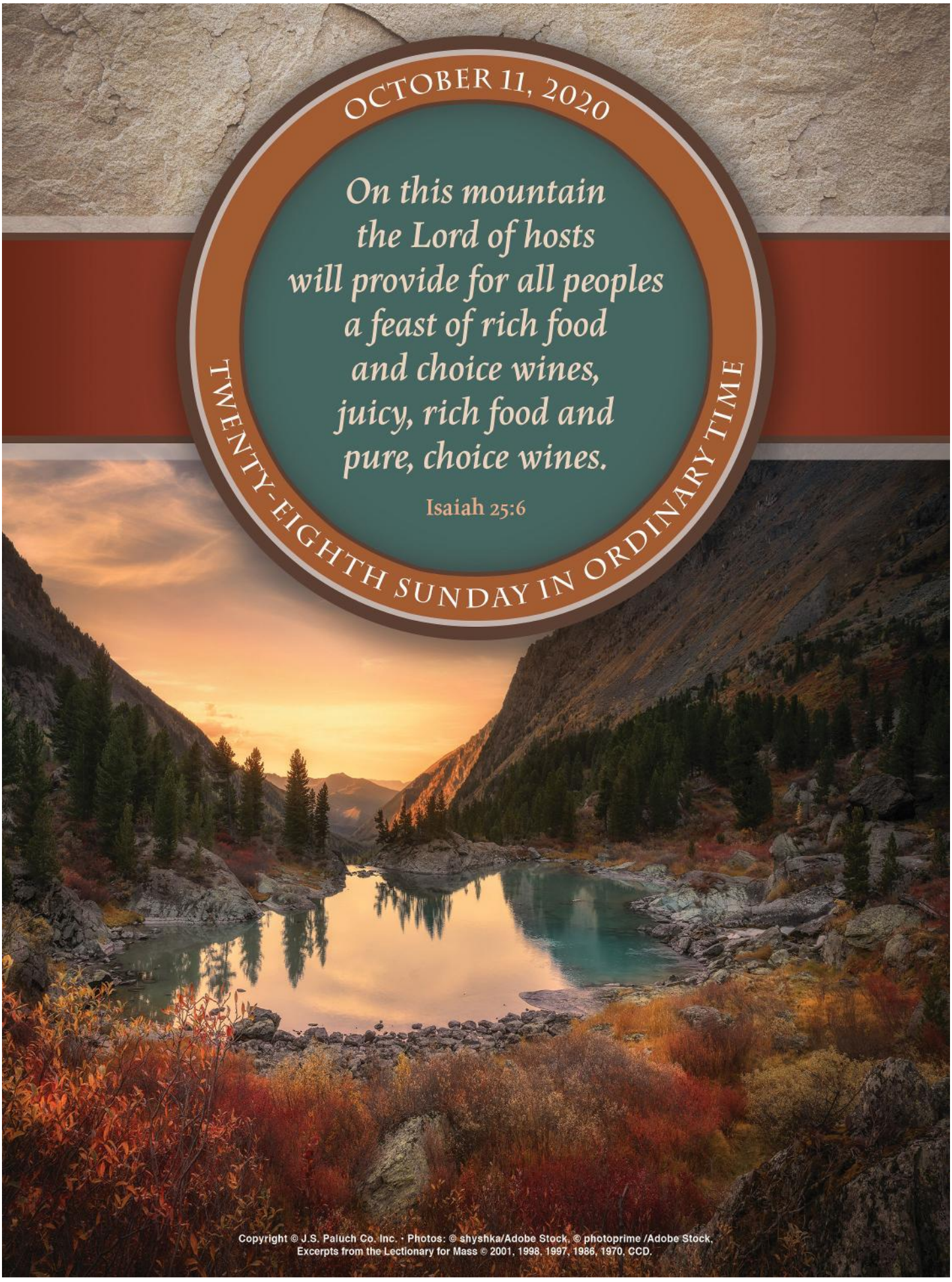

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Saint Teresa of Jesus (1515-1582)

October 15

Let nothing disturb you; let nothing frighten you. Gifted with a passionate spirit, young Teresa dreamed of converting Muslims and becoming a martyr. All things are passing; God never changes. But her mother's death when Teresa was fourteen inspired lifelong devotion to Our Lady, and Teresa entered the Carmelites, Mary's order, despite her father's objections and her own fragile health. Patience gains everything. Initially, she enjoyed her lax convent's sociability and "busyness," but mystical prayer and John of the Cross's collaboration inspired her to reform the Carmelites. Whoever has God, lacks nothing. When her ideals encountered resistance and brought suffering, she maintained her peace—and humor. Discovered devouring leftovers, she told her mildly scandalized nuns, "When I fast, I fast! When I eat, I eat!" To nuns demanding less work and more prayer in the convent schedule, she retorted: "What we really need around here are fewer starry eyes and more strong arms!" God alone is enough! The italicized sentences here are her "Breviary Bookmark," the simple, profound prayer of Teresa, the first woman Doctor of the Church.

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God Revealed to The Nations

What wonderful images we have today of the reign of God! Isaiah speaks to us of a great feast—a heavenly feast—a feast of abundance with rich foods and choice wines. It is the Lord's own affair, Isaiah explains, when God will unite all nations, dry every tear, and destroy death forever. Then, too, will the entire earth rejoice in the Lord and bask in God's saving grace.

Jesus speaks of heaven in terms of a feast as well. Here, the kingdom of heaven is likened to a king's wedding feast given for his son. This is a feast of abundance also, with the fattened cattle prepared just so. But many of the people invited don't want to come, so the king invites anyone who would honor his son by their presence there. And Paul tells us that whether we live abundantly or in humble circumstances, we can do all things in the Lord who strengthens us.

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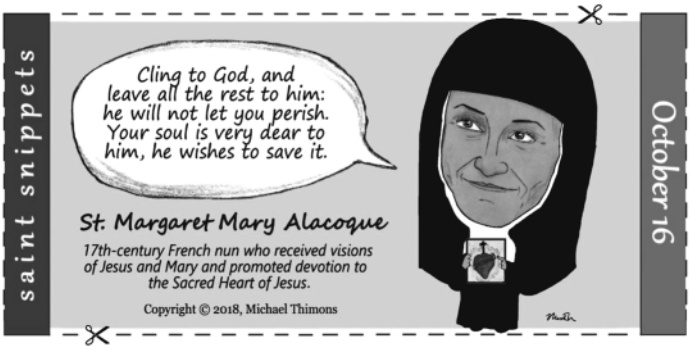
Readings for the Week

Monday:	Gal 4:22-24, 26-27, 31 — 5:1; Ps 113:1b-5a, 6-7; Lk 11:29-32
Tuesday:	Gal 5:1-6; Ps 119:41, 43-45, 47-48; Lk 11:37-41
Wednesday:	Gal 5:18-25; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Lk 11:42-46
Thursday:	Eph 1:1-10; Ps 98:1-6; Lk 11:47-54
Friday:	Eph 1:11-14; Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 12-13; Lk 12:1-7
Saturday:	Eph 1:15-23; Ps 8:2-3ab, 4-7; Lk 12:8-12
Sunday:	Is 45:1, 4-6; Ps 96:1, 3-5, 7-10; 1 Thes 1:1-5b; Mt 22:15-21



Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Monday:	Columbus Day; Canadian Thanksgiving Day
Wednesday:	St. Callistus I
Thursday:	St. Teresa of Jesus
Friday:	St. Hedwig; St. Margaret Mary Alacoque; National Boss's Day
Saturday:	St. Ignatius of Antioch

Today's Readings

First Reading — On this mountain the LORD will make for all peoples a feast of rich food and choice wines (Isaiah 25:6-10a).

Psalm — I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life (Psalm 23).

Second Reading — God will supply whatever you need (Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20).

Gospel — I have prepared my banquet, and everything is ready. Come to the feast! (Matthew 22:1-14 [1-10]).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 11, 2020
I can do all things in him who strengthens me.
—Philippians 4:13

Treasures From Our Tradition

When the fathers of the Second Vatican Council met to discuss the sacrament of penance, they were required to draw up a new rite, including several forms. The hot button for debate was so-called "general absolution," by which a penitent could be absolved of sin without confessing to a priest. This was a difficult debate, compounded by widely varying traditions in both East and West. Some were surprised to learn that the Holy See had already given permission, during the First and Second World Wars, for this form. In 1944 the Vatican issued a decree saying this form was valid under extreme conditions, which bishops in mission lands and Latin America took as a kind of "blanket permission."
Thus, the fathers of the Council were alarmed to find this practice fairly widespread, not only in war, but in peaceful places with huge numbers of faithful and few priests. Although they eventually produced a ritual with three different forms, the forms are not considered equal, and the enriched and revised individual form is preferred. The enrichments include a welcome of the penitent, a sign of the cross with an encouragement to trust in God's compassion, new texts rich in the Word of God, praise for God's mercy, and a dismissal.—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J.S. P aluch Co.

Today's readings do nothing less than reveal the secret to happiness. To whet our appetite, Isaiah describes what paradise feels like: "a feast of rich food and choice wines, juicy, rich foods, and pure, choice wines." In this paradise, says Isaiah, God dries our tears and puts an end to death. The psalm response lures us with its own descriptive words for paradise: restful, refreshing, fearless, overflowing. Just when all of these extravagant images seem too good to be true, Saint Paul's letter brings us down to earth. Paul is confident that he will one day be in heaven, but he knows just as certainly that he is not there yet. His "secret" to happiness is to trust in God's providence under every earthly circumstance. Echoing Isaiah's images of paradise, the Gospel promises that the Lord has invited us all to the heavenly feast. Like Paul, may we respond with trusting hearts.

DESTROYING MURDERERS, BURNING CITIES

Jesus' parable of the king's wedding feast sounds extreme to our modern ears. After all, if a king—a beloved celebrity, say—were to invited us to his son's party, which one of us would refuse, much less murder the messenger? In Matthew's Gospel, the chief priests and elders obstinately refuse to acknowledge Jesus' mission as the anointed Son of God. Today's parable suggests that God will punish this stubbornness by burning their city. The extreme violence of this parable seems to be aimed at Jesus' stubborn first-century audience, but falls short of hitting us.

RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS, BUILDING BRIDGES

Instead of dismissing or quaintly smiling at today's parable, we can let the word of God work in our hearts. Jesus, who is the Word of God, exists in all time and knows each of us intimately. He speaks to us today through this very parable. The king's invitation applies to us. The Creator of the universe calls us, and we must respond. Eternal life is at stake.
Today's liturgy is a rich opportunity to identify the invitation extended by God. The liturgy itself is our collective glimpse into heaven. Perhaps the Lord is calling us to be more attentive to the liturgy, or to enter more deeply into a parish's weekend experience. Or perhaps our liturgical prayer time today will reveal a call to service, an invitation to care intentionally for strangers in need or for people we know. Perhaps, too, we might discern a call to repair brokenness. Most of us do not witness murder or burning cities on a daily basis, but we surely know of relationships in need of repair. Once we hear the invitation to reconcile with others, we can pray for the strength to respond. Instead of ignoring the summons by filling our time with busyness, we can ask the Lord to help us apologize, or forgive, or begin a difficult conversation. "Many are invited," Jesus tells us. He will help us respond.

Today's Readings: Is 25:6–10a; Ps 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; Phil 4:12–14, 19–20; Mt 22:1–14 [1–10]

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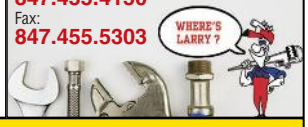

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