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Dine WITH THE Lord

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Have you ever been invited to a party? We, Filipinos, love to go to birthday parties, anniversaries, and reunions. We dine with friends, family, and loved ones. On such occasions, we share ourselves with them, saying "hello," chatting, and having a good time.

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks Matthew to follow Him, and Matthew, in turn, invites Jesus to a banquet. Jesus went to dine at the house of Matthew, a tax collector.

Dining with Jesus in this passage provides significant context for Jesus' ministry, which we can apply to ourselves. One of the important aspects is the attitude of hospitality and fellowship. Matthew welcomed Jesus into his house and hosted a meal for him. Sharing a meal with someone was an important gesture of hospitality and fellowship in that culture. It allowed for greater connection, conversation, and relationship-building. Similarly, by surrendering our hearts, exposing ourselves to His presence, and seeking close fellowship with Him, we might invite Jesus into our life, symbolically "dining" with Him.

Another aspect is acceptance and inclusion. Jesus' decision to dine at the house of a tax collector and spend time with sinners violated society's standards while demonstrating His inclusive compassion. Jesus demonstrated that no one is beyond the reach of His mercy and salvation by mingling with those considered outcasts and marginalized. As Christ's disciples, we are called to follow in His footsteps by extending acceptance and love to all people, regardless of their backgrounds or apparent social position.

Eating with Jesus represents getting spiritual nourishment and sustenance, much as physical food does for our bodies. We receive His lessons, knowledge, and spiritual direction through our relationship with Him, which nurtures our souls and develops our faith. Through fellowship with Him, we partake in His teachings, wisdom, and spiritual guidance, which nourishes our souls and strengthens our faith.

Dining with Jesus expresses a sense of closeness and familiarity with God. When we share a meal with someone, we often get involved in intimate conversation and the sharing of thoughts and emotions. Dining with Jesus, in a similar way, represents entering into a profound communion with Him, where we may freely express ourselves, listen to His words, and experience His presence in our life. It represents the formation of a personal connection with God based on love, trust, and vulnerability.

We are asked to dine with the Lord, surrender our life to Him, draw to His meek and humble heart, feel His acceptance and love, gain spiritual sustenance, and establish a close connection with Him. It reminds us of the transformational power of His presence, as well as the depth of His grace, which is available to all who seek Him. Jesus tells us to abandon all that leads to sin and to accept his invitation. He is constantly ready and eagerly awaits our conversion. We are also called, like Matthew, to be His disciples and to be agents of salvation for others. Let us not hesitate to come closer to Jesus, and keep in mind that Jesus sought out not the righteous but the sinners.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon (Ps 33 : 11, 19)

The designs of his heart are from age to age, to rescue their souls from death and to keep them alive in famine.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P—In the Gospel, we hear the story of the call of the tax collector, Matthew. Later, Jesus sits at table with other tax collectors and those regarded by ancient Jewish society as sinners. This offends the Pharisees who object to such a table association. Jesus comes as a divine physician who heals people of their ailments. But he cannot help those who are self-righteous, those who feel they do not need God's mercy.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.
(Pause)

P—Have mercy on us, O Lord.
All—For we have sinned against you.
P—Show us, O Lord, your mercy.
All—And grant us your salvation.
P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.
All—Lord, have mercy.
P—Christ, have mercy.
All—Christ, have mercy.
P—Lord, have mercy.
All—Lord, have mercy.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Clothe us, Lord God, with the virtues of the Heart of your Son and set us aflame with his love, that, conformed to his image, we may merit a share in eternal redemption.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.
All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading

(Gn 23:1–4, 19; 24:1–8, 62–67) *(Sit)*

In his love for Rebekah, Isaac found solace after the death of his mother Sarah.

A reading from the Book of Genesis

THE SPAN of Sarah's life was one hundred and twenty-seven years. She died in Kiriatharba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham performed the customary mourning rites for her. Then he left the side of his dead one and addressed the Hittites: "Although I am a resident alien among you, sell me from your holdings a piece of property for a burial ground, that I may bury my dead wife."

After the transaction, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

Abraham had now reached a ripe old age, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. Abraham said to the senior servant of his household, who had charge of all his possessions: "Put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the LORD the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not procure a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I live, but that you will go to my own land and to my kindred to get a wife for my son Isaac." The servant asked him: "What if the woman is unwilling to follow me to this land? Should I then take your son back to the land from which you migrated?" "Never take my son back there for any reason," Abraham told him. "The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and the land of my kin, and who confirmed by oath the promise he then made to me, 'I will give this land to your descendants'– he will send his messenger before you, and you will obtain a wife for my son there. If the woman is unwilling to follow you, you will be released from this oath. But never take my son back there!"

A long time later, Isaac went to live in the region of the Negeb. One day toward evening he went out . . . in the field, and as he looked around, he noticed that camels were approaching. Rebekah, too, was looking about, and when she saw him, she alighted from her camel and asked the servant, "Who is the man out there, walking through the fields toward us?" "That is my master," replied the servant. Then she covered herself with her veil. The servant recounted to Isaac all the things he had done. Then Isaac took Rebekah into his tent; he married her, and thus she became his wife. In his love for her, Isaac found solace after the death of his mother Sarah.

—The word of the Lord.
All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 106)

R—Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

1. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Who can tell the mighty deeds of the LORD, or proclaim all his praises? **(R)**

2. Blessed are they who observe what is right, who do always what is just. Remember us, O LORD, as you favor your people. **(R)**

3. Visit me with your saving help, that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones,
rejoice in the joy of your people, and glory with your inheritance. **(R)**

Verse before the Gospel

(Mt 11:28) *(Stand)*

All—Alleluia, alleluia. Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give

you rest, says the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Mt 9:9–13)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
All—Glory to you, O Lord.

AS JESUS passed by, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" He heard this and said, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."
—The Gospel of the Lord.
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily *(Sit)*

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Jesus called the tax collector Matthew to follow him, and Matthew immediately left behind his customs post to begin a new life. May we have the courage to follow Jesus and leave behind whatever hinders us from being his faithful follower. For every petition we say:

R—Father, hear our prayer.

C—May the leaders and ministers of the Church trust in your mercy, in their challenging and delicate task of guiding your flock. May they be a sign of the primacy of mercy in their pastoral ministry. We pray: **(R)**

C—Like the tax collector, Matthew, may sinners turn their gaze on Jesus and accept his call to work in the promotion of your Kingdom. We pray: **(R)**

C—May we not focus on our sinful past but rather on your invitation to face the present and future, trusting in your mercy rather than in our capacities. We pray: **(R)**

C—May we become a Church that welcomes sinners and outsiders, a Church who is like your Son, Jesus, merciful and compassionate. We pray: **(R)**

C—May our departed brothers and sisters come before you, merciful Father. May they be worthy to experience your eternal communion. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions *(pause)*. We pray: **(R)**

P—Father having had mercy on Matthew, Jesus your Son chose him to be an Apostle. May we experience you as God who loves us, and who wants to meet us first. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts *(Stand)*

P—Pray, brethren…
All—May the Lord

Prayer over the Offerings

P—O God, Father of mercies, who, because of the great love with which you loved us, with untold goodness gave us your Only Begotten Son, grant, we pray, that, being perfectly united with him, we may offer you worthy homage.
Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

Preface *(The boundless charity of Christ)*

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.
P—Lift up your hearts.
All—We lift them up to the Lord.
P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All—It is right and just.
P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.
For raised up high on the Cross, he gave himself up for us with a wonderful love and poured out Blood and water from his pierced side, the wellspring of the Church's Sacraments, so that, won over to the open Heart of the Savior, all might draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.
And so, with all the Angels and Saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:
All—Holy, Holy, Holy... *(Kneel)*

Acclamation *(Stand)*

All—Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father…
P—Deliver us, Lord…
All—For the kingdom...

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion *(Kneel)*

P—Behold the Lamb of God...
All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Jn 19:34)

One of the soldiers opened his side with a lance, and at once there came forth blood and water.

Prayer after Communion *(Stand)*

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*
Made partakers in your Sacrament of charity, we humbly implore your mercy, Lord, that we may be conformed to Christ on earth and merit to be coheirs of his glory in heaven.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

P—May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, (+) and the Holy Spirit.
All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—Go forth the Mass is ended.
All—Thanks be to God.

PRAYER TO THE

SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Divine Jesus, you have said, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," behold me kneeling at your feet, filled with a lively faith and confidence in the promises dictated by your Sacred Heart and pronounced by your adorable lips. I come to ask this favor: *(Here silently mention your petitions)*.

To whom can I turn to if not to you whose Heart is the source of all graces and merits? Where should I seek if not in the treasure which contains all the riches of your kindness and mercy? Where should I knock if not at the door through which God gives himself to us and through which we go to God? I have recourse to you, Heart of Jesus. In you I find consolation when afflicted, protection when persecuted, strength when burdened with trials, and light in doubt and darkness.

Dear Jesus, I firmly believe that you can grant me the grace I implore, even though it should require a miracle. You have only to will it, and my prayer will be granted. I admit that I am most unworthy of your favors, but this is not a reason for me to be discouraged. You are the God of mercy and you will not refuse a contrite heart. Cast upon me a look of mercy, I beg of you, and your kind Heart will find in my miseries and weaknesses a reason for granting my prayers.

O Sacred Heart, whatever may be your decision with regard to my request, I will never stop adoring, loving, praising and serving you. My Jesus, be pleased to accept this my act of perfect resignation to the decrees of your adorable Heart which I sincerely desire may be fulfilled in and by me and all your creatures forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I know that there is but one thing impossible to you: to be without pity for those who are suffering or in distress. Look upon me, I beg of you, dear Jesus, and grant me the grace for which I humbly implore you through the Immaculate Heart of your most sorrowful Mother. You have entrusted me to her as her child, and her prayers are all-powerful with you. Amen.

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