



25th Sunday Ord. Time Yr A

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Our text sees Jesus on his way to Jerusalem. He will soon cross the Jordan River to Jericho and then to Bethany and Jerusalem. So he is explaining his teachings rather than responding to those who want to be rid of him in Jerusalem. He has moved on from explaining how his disciples need to be forgiving (last Sunday's Gospel) to how they can be part of the kingdom of God. This was prompted by the approach of the rich young man (Mt19:16-22). Obeying the Commandments is the fundamental choice for disciples. But, a true disciple must go further and modify his life in the pattern of Jesus. Wealth, power, position or heritage must not be relied on, but rather, our trust must be in Jesus (be like little children Mt19:13-15). The disciples respond to these challenges with the question: "*Who then, can be saved?*" Jesus replies: "*For man it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.*" (Mt19:25-26) The disciple must learn that he cannot earn salvation; it is a free gift of God. We are all given different opportunities to respond to the Lord's invitation to work for his Kingdom. The gift of eternal life (the fruit of salvation) is not dependant on how many opportunities we were given and to which we responded. Our text challenges our trust in the ways of the world which are based on merit and working for rewards. Disciples are to work hard for the kingdom of God as a response to God's tremendous love for us. We can't pay back for love but we can respond generously within the opportunities we are given. The gift of eternal life is so great – we could never do enough work to earn it. Our text, The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, helps us to understand about the free gift of salvation.

Read: **Matthew 20: 1 – 16**

Meditatio: "Thy kingdom come" are words in the Lord's Prayer, what do these words mean for me, what do they ask of me? In what way have I been 'hired by the Lord'? When in my life have I understood that God was choosing me? What agreement has God made with me? Have there been times when I was 'standing idle' i.e. not knowing where my life was leading? How would I determine a fair wage? What do I think of those who 'come to faith' only in the last years of their life or on their deathbed? Have I experienced unemployment? Do I know someone who is unemployed? What is a 'fair wage' for the unemployed? Have I felt 'hard done by' in the wages I received? How am I working in the Lord's vineyard? Why do I do what I do in working in the Lord's vineyard? Do I do it for reward – 'fee for service'? Why do I keep the Commandments? What motivates me to work: at my employment, in my home, for the Church/my Parish, for God? Do I understand my dependence on God? Does this Parable challenge me? Do I think my work is undervalued? Who do I talk to when I have a grievance? Do I accept advice or explanations when they are offered to me? Do I get envious of others who get more generous treatment than I do? "*Thus the last will be first, and the first, last*" – how does this relate to me?

Oratio: Pray for the coming of the Kingdom. Pray for vocations i.e. hearing God's call and responding to it. Pray in thanks for God's infinite love for each and every person. Pray for faith and trust in God. Pray for workers especially itinerant workers and those whose work is physically tough. Pray for the unemployed. Pray for good industrial relations. Pray for downtrodden and/or the underpaid. Pray that we will work for God's glory in response to his great and unearned love for us. Pray for unity in diversity. Pray that envy will not disrupt relationships. Pray for those who worry about being good enough to get to heaven; salvation is God's free gift to be accepted that sets us free to help build his Kingdom. Pray for hope in the promised glories of eternal life.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer – Take time to see what motivates you.

✍ Fr Joe

Matthew 20: 1 – 16

Jesus said to his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard.

Going out at about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place and said to them, "You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage." So they went.

At about the sixth hour and again at about the ninth hour, he went out and did the same.

Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing round, and he said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?" "Because no one has hired us" they answered. He said to them, "You go to my vineyard too."

In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to the bailiff, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first." So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each.

When the first came, they expected to get more, but they too received one denarius each. They took it, but grumbled at the landowner. "The men who came last" they said "have done only one hour, and you have treated the same as us, though we have done a heavy day's work in all the heat."

He answered one of them and said, "My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the last-comer as much as I pay you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?"

Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.'