

SUNDAY GOSPEL BIBLE SHARING



Wednesday September 20th for the 25nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

OPENING PRAYER: Loving God, we gather together to share life and to seek your ways which are always beyond what we can understand. May your Holy Spirit breathe upon us as we reflect on the Word you place before us today. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Matthew 20:1-16

- 1 “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard.**
- 2 After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.**
- 3 Going out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace,**
- 4* and he said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.’**
- 5 So they went off.**
And he went out again around noon, and around three o’clock, and did likewise.
- 6 Going out about five o’clock, he found others standing around, and said to them,**
‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’
- 7 They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us.’**

He said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard.’

**8 When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman,
‘Summon the laborers and give them their pay,
beginning with the last and ending with the first.’**

**9 When those who had started about five o’clock came, each received the
usual daily wage. 10 So when the first came, they thought that they would
receive more,**

but each of them also got the usual wage.

11 And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner,

**12 saying, ‘These last ones worked only one hour,
and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day’s burden and the
heat.’**

13 He said to one of them in reply,

**‘My friend, I am not cheating you.* Did you not agree with me for the usual
daily wage?’**

**14* Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as
you?**

15 Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money?

Are you envious because I am generous?’

16 Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

* [20:4] What is just: although the wage is not stipulated as in the case of those first hired, it will be fair.

* [20:8] Beginning with the last...the first: this element of the parable has no other purpose than to show how the first knew what the last were given (Mt 20:12).

* [20:13] I am not cheating you: literally, “I am not treating you unjustly.”

* [20:14–15] The owner’s conduct involves no violation of justice (Mt 20:4, 13), and that all the workers receive the same wage is due only to his generosity to the latest arrivals; the resentment of the first comes from envy.

* [20:16] See note on Mt 19:30.* [20:1–16] This parable is peculiar to Matthew. It is difficult to know whether the evangelist composed it or received it as part of his traditional material and, if the latter is the case, what its original reference was. In its present context its close association with Mt 19:30 suggests that its teaching is the equality of all the disciples in the reward of inheriting eternal life.

Thoughts and reflection on the Gospel Passage

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

1. How easy or hard is it for us to accept and embrace a God whose ways are sometimes not our ways?
2. Do you ever struggle with the whole issue of fairness in life, e.g., bad or irreligious people doing well, and really good people experiencing a lot of pain and hardship?
3. How big or small is your God? Do you think that career criminals, dictators, or rapists who turn to God on their deathbed (e.g., the good thief) should be admitted to heaven?
4. Name one thing today's Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed and act on.

Commentary

This Gospel is perhaps one of the most puzzling and disliked parables in the Bible because of its perceived grave injustice. Some scholars say that the parable is told as a response to a question Peter raised on behalf of his fellow apostles: What reward would they receive for giving up everything to work in the Lord's vineyard? In this parable, no one is lazy. The men are standing around only because no one has hired them. But once hired, they go to work and are paid the agreed wage at the end of the day. However, their sense of justice is upset when those hired later in the day receive the same amount. They object to the fact that the late workers are getting more than they should be paid. In truth, however, the landowner has not been unfair to the all-day workers, having paid them the agreed wage. Rather, he decides to be very generous to the latecomers; hence, the second to the last verse of today's Gospel: "Are you envious because I am generous?" Envy on the part of Jesus' followers is unwarranted since every gift of God completely comes from his generosity, and not from any individual's ability or activity. God's justice looks more like human mercy. The parable has two other applications: one to Matthew's community living several decades after Christ, and to us living 2,000 years later. In regards to Matthew's community made up of mostly Jewish Christians and some Gentile Christians, the farmer may have looked upon the Gentiles as the workers going out late in the day and receiving the same wages or in their same spiritual blessings as the Jews who have been faithful to God all their lives. In this case, the Jewish Christians may have erroneously believed that one earned salvation by good works. Salvation is a gift and not something we earn. For us, the issue might be death-bed conversions like the good thief whom some, maybe many, believed 'stole heaven.' We do not earn

heaven by good works but, rather, by opening our hearts to God's saving grace. Whether we have served him from sunrise to sunset or enlisted for service only at the eleventh hour, God blesses us with his bounty not because we have earned his goodness, but because of who he is, namely, a God of mercy and compassion.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Room 5 and Zoom

Starting Sept 20 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm EST Weekly on Wednesday
notes

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting

Time: Sept 20, 2023 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZlkd-qgrj8qG9Rt4LoXWaku9w9Mo6AzLDCs/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGupzspEtSRsBiHRpwAHYigb_zziClfjfpviEvJDBhkYwjjb_UbH7opMcL8

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86903804010?pwd=MGJydS9qSW9LSzNGblZSM2xZcWpGZz09>

Meeting ID: 869 0380 4010

Passcode: 086586

One tap mobile

+13017158592,