

2014

- In this parable that Jesus just told us, after the vineyard owner pays the 11th hour workers the same as the all-day workers, we tend to think: “*Boy, he’s going to have trouble finding workers tomorrow morning!*”
- But the point of Jesus’ parable is simply to show God’s unbounded generosity.
- After all, God is a terrible businessman; He always gives much more to us than we can ever give to Him.

- This parable emphasizes the love of God for all who sincerely seek His kingdom—whether they find it in the morning, or at noon, or in the evening of their lives.
- God—the vineyard owner—calls everyone one way or the other—even those who may never even have heard of Jesus.
- No person is created simply to be condemned; otherwise, how could Paul say that God “...*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*”? (1Tim 2:4)
- But He may call us to the harvest at different times and in different ways.
- Those who have heard the Gospel of Christ adequately are bound to it, for that is the essence and definition of what is good.
- For those who have not...they are bound to follow the natural law that God implanted in their heart at their creation, and to do what is right as best they know how.

- Now some may bristle at today’s parable because of pride as did the early-hires: “*I’m a cradle Catholic*”, or “*I’ve been a Catholic or a Christian for decades!?*”
- ...especially in feeling superior to persons who may have led a less-than-perfect life and have later repented and “come to Jesus”.
- But such feelings and thoughts are not good.
- Remember the older brother in the Prodigal Son parable...that he was angry and jealous of his younger brother who had squandered his youth and possessions, but then had returned home and had been accepted joyfully by the father.

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- What did the father say to the older brother? *“Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.”* (Luke 15:31-32)
- So rejoice with those who find God whenever they find Him... because so many people never do. And rejoice that we get the privilege of working in our Father’s vineyard at any time.
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- As for those who come to the vineyard later, remember the prophet Ezekiel: *As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways...* (Ez 33:11) God’s pleasure is in human repentance and our turning toward Him.
- And, of course, Jesus tells us: *“I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”* (Luke 15:7)
- This is God’s generous mercy overshadowing his justice.
- And if we truly love our neighbor, we, will rejoice in his conversion.

- We are so privileged that God has already given us the grace to love Him and be members of the Church...to have the honor and joy and unmatched gift of receiving God in the Eucharist.
- But that’s just it—we are here by God’s grace...and we are not privy as to how He works in other people’s lives.
- Our fellow men and women are not our competitors or adversaries in the spiritual life; all of us struggle as a single team toward the finish line.
- Some may run faster...some may run slower...some may have to stop and walk a little while. But our desire should be to get the entire team across the line.
- And leadership is not just getting yourself across the line, but helping and encouraging your teammates along the way.

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- That’s the way to look at others who may be struggling in the faith or even in basic morality—not to be superior, not to berate, but to encourage and to support, and to point out the obstacles and dangers in their path.
 - They may have to lean on you, but that is what Christianity is—helping others even at our own inconvenience...keeping our eyes fixed on the finish line and trying to help our teammates to reach it.
 - That is the leadership to which we are called...to be the “*salt of the earth and the light of the world.*”
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 - Whether only one or ten billion people are faithful to him, each will know the unbounded love of God and have joy beyond measure...and He longs for all to finish the race.
 - But...neither is Jesus’ parable today to be interpreted to mean that we should wait until the 11th hour to come to God...to sin and try to “time” our “repentance” to the end of our lives.
 - For such a “repentance” is no repentance at all; that is simply presumption on God’s mercy.
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- One day three young demons were talking to Satan about their plans to tempt and ruin men.
 - The first said, “I will tell them there is no God.” Satan replied, “That will not fool many, for they know that there is a God.”
 - The second said, “I will tell men there is no hell.” Satan replied, “You will deceive no one; men know there is a hell for sin.”
 - The third said, “I will tell men there is no hurry.” “Go!” said Satan, “You will ruin them by the thousands.”
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- Love of God entails an eagerness for the work of the vineyard...to bring others to Christ.
 - And our time to prepare—to work—is now. Jesus tells us: “*Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come.*”(Mk

13:33)...and He says: “*We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work.*” (John 9:4)

- And there will be no greater joy for us than to be doing our duty when the Lord comes—loving Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and loving our neighbor as ourselves.
- And as Jesus tells us: “*Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them.*” (Luke 12:37)
- And “*...no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him...*” (1Cor 2:9)

Reading 1

[Is 55:6-9](#)

Seek the LORD **while he may be found,**
call him while he is near.
Let the scoundrel forsake his way,
and the wicked his thoughts;
let him turn to the LORD for mercy;
to our God, who is generous in forgiving.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.
As high as the heavens are above the earth,
so high are my ways above your ways
and my thoughts above your thoughts.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18](#)

R. (18a) The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the LORD and highly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.

R. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

R. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

The LORD is just in all his ways
and holy in all his works.
The LORD is near to all who call upon him,
to all who call upon him in truth.

R. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

Reading II

[Phil 1:20c-24, 27a](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.
For to me life is Christ, and death is gain.

If I go on living in the flesh,
that means fruitful labor for me.
And I do not know which I shall choose.
I am caught between the two.

I long to depart this life and be with Christ,
for that is far better.
Yet that I remain in the flesh
is more necessary for your benefit.

Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Gospel

[Mt 20:1-16a](#)

Jesus told his disciples this parable:

“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner
who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard.

After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage,
he sent them into his vineyard.

Going out about nine o’clock,
the landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace,
and he said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard,
and I will give you what is just.’

So they went off.

And he went out again around noon,
and around three o’clock, and did likewise.

Going out about five o’clock,
the landowner found others standing around, and said to them,
‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’

They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us.’

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

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.’

When those who had started about five o’clock came,
each received the usual daily wage.

So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more,
but each of them also got the usual wage.

And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, 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.’

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?

Take what is yours and go.

What if I wish to give this last one the same as you?

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

Are you envious because I am generous?’

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