ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord.
Should they cry to me in any distress,
I will hear them, and I will be their Lord for ever.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law
upon love of you and of our neighbour,
grant that, by keeping your precepts,
we may merit to attain eternal life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING — Isaiah 55:6-9

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
call to him while he is still near.
Let the wicked man abandon his way,
the evil man his thoughts.
Let him turn back to the Lord who will take pity on him,
to our God who is rich in forgiving;
for my thoughts are not your thoughts,
my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who speaks.
Yes, the heavens are as high above earth
as my ways are above your ways,
my thoughts above your thoughts.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM — Psalm 144

Response:
The Lord is close to all who call him.

1. I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever.
The Lord is great, highly to be praised,
his greatness cannot be measured. **(R.)**

2. The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. **(R.)**

3. The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
who call on him from their hearts. **(R.)**

SECOND READING — Philippians 1:20-24,27

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.

Christ will be glorified in my body, whether by my life or by my death. Life to me, of course, is Christ, but then death would bring me something more; but then again, if living in this body means doing work which is having good results – I do not know what I should choose. I am caught in this dilemma: I want to be gone and be with Christ, which would be very much the better, but for me to stay alive in this body is a more urgent need for your sake.

Avoid anything in your everyday lives that would be unworthy of the gospel of Christ.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessings on the King who comes,
in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven
and glory in the highest heavens!
Alleluia!

GOSPEL — Matthew 20:1-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

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 into my vineyard too.' In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his 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 them 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive with favour, O Lord, we pray,
the offerings of your people,
that what they profess with devotion and faith
may be theirs through these heavenly mysteries.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

You have laid down your precepts to be carefully kept;
may my ways be firm in keeping your statutes.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Graciously raise up, O Lord,
those you renew with this Sacrament,
that we may come to possess your redemption
both in mystery and in the manner of our life.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

If you cannot find Christ in the beggar at the church door, you will not find him in the chalice.

St John Chrysostom

redemptorist publications

Concordat cum originali: +Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin. Additional material, cum permissu: +Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin. Commentary by Fr Anthony Cassidy CSsR. The English translation of the Entrance and Communion Antiphons, Collect, Prayer over the Offerings, Gloria, Profession of Faith and Prayer after Communion are taken from The Roman Missal, © 2010 International Commission of English in the Liturgy Corporation. Jerusalem Bible version of the scriptures © Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., and Doubleday & Co. Inc. Responsorial Psalms are copyright The Grail and/or Geoffrey Chapman Ltd. Published in Ireland by Redemptorist Communications (www.redcoms.org); Published in the UK by Redemptorist Publications (www.rpbooks.co.uk).

20 SEPTEMBER 2020 — 25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year A • Psalter Week 1

IT'S NOT FAIR! (MATTHEW 20:1-16)

Today's Gospel passage tells of the workers in the vineyard who are hired at different times of the day, and so put in unequal amounts of work.

At the end of the day, the foreman is told to pay the wages in reverse order to the time when the labourers were employed, thus setting up the ones engaged at the beginning of the day to expect a higher rate of pay. Most people probably feel some sympathy with their indignant reaction on discovering that everyone receives the same remuneration.

Perhaps we might consider another point of view: that of the owner. It is not the fault of the workers that they found no employment until the final hour before dusk. They have indeed been "standing here idle all day", not because they were unwilling to work, but as they tell the landowner, it is "because no one has hired us". They also have families to feed, their needs are just as great as those of the others, who were probably younger and fitter and so chosen first. The owner sees their willingness to work, but also their need, and responds to that. In justice, the ones hired earlier have nothing to complain about because they receive the amount to which they agreed: their fault lies in criticising the owner for his generosity, and perhaps not appreciating the desperate situation and anxiety of those who were earlier passed over by all those who could have helped them with a day's employment. ■

REFLECT

In certain parts of the world today, the setting of this parable is acted out daily. Gangs of people gather at a pick-up point, a lorry arrives, and those engaged clamber aboard and are driven to a building site, roadworks or some agricultural place of work. Such people have no assured employment, therefore no certain pay, but they do have family responsibilities.

Translated into religious terms, we can see that there is a lesson here. It is tempting for a person to think that having been a practising Christian for a long time entitles them to some sort of special recognition. But the Gospel teaching is of our expectations being reversed; that God does not think as we do. The parable is concerned with the attitude of the owner. It is a trap: we instinctively, perhaps, side with those individuals who have borne the heat of the day and are annoyed that the most recent arrivals receive the same pay as they do. But the ones who come later are not "shirkers": they just were not given the same chances as the others. The Gospels show Jesus as being concerned with such people, those on the margins, who are written off by those who are socially and religiously respectable. But the master (God) does not write off this latter group either: rather he appeals to them to change their attitude, to see the others' situation from a different point of view. God's mercy extends to all, and there are no degrees of mercy. ■

DO

Make the sign of the cross with holy water: ask the Lord for the grace to see others as God sees them.

LEARN

The workers hired later are not "shirkers": they have been available all day; it is not their fault that no one has offered them work.

A theme throughout the Gospel tradition is that of reversal, for instance, "the last will be first and the first, last".

To be a disciple of Jesus is more important than the length of time that a person has been one.

SAY

With the Lord there is mercy, and plentiful redemption
(Psalm 130:7)