

SAINT MARY MAGDALEN SMALL GROUPS



Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time | Sunday, September 20, 2020

The Gospel of Matthew 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.”

Reading 1: [IS 55:6-9](#)

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Reading 2: [PHIL1:20C-24, 27A](#)

Our pastoral year theme is “Created and Called to Love”. Pope Francis calls us to care for *all of God’s creation*. We were *created* to love, and we are *called* to love. We have *the capacity* to love, and *the obligation* to love. Our stewardship focus on love this week: generosity. As a Parish, we are reflecting upon the rich teachings of “Laudato Si” – pointing to chapters that bring the Gospel message home. This month: Chapter 2.

Laudato Si' – 90

'...we should be particularly indignant at the enormous inequalities in our midst, whereby we continue to tolerate some considering themselves more worthy than others. ... In practice, we continue to tolerate that some consider themselves more human than others, as if they had been born with greater rights.'

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS & DISCUSSION

SCRIPTURE CONNECTIONS

IS 55: 6-9: Isaiah urges the wicked of Israel to seek a new way, the way of the Lord, to turn from serving their own needs to start working for the good of all. There is still time – for God is generous in forgiving, for He does not think in the same way that we do. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts.” God's salvation is extended to all nations.

What “thoughts” or what “ways” are we stuck in that may not be God’s ways? How easy or hard is it for us to accept and embrace a God whose ways are sometimes not our ways?

MT 20: 1-16: The parable of the co-workers and the “usual daily wage”, is really not about the wage, but God’s grace. As humans, we get stuck on rewards and fairness – we keep score. Can you imagine the talk in the vineyard that went on as each new group of workers joined the others? We know what they felt by the grumbling when they all received the “usual daily wage”! But God is a giver, of love and grace, to the last who accepted his invitation, to the first at the table...salvation is possible. He gives freely and asks his followers to do the same – and to receive graciously. It is not up to us to judge who is deserving – nor to look down upon our “co-workers”. “Entitled” is our way of thinking, the human way, not God’s way.

Do you think that people who turn to God on their deathbed (e.g., the good thief) should be admitted to heaven? Even if their life was one of criminality or hate? Do you struggle with issues of fairness in life, e.g., “bad” people doing well, and good people experiencing hardship? What can one do to develop a better attitude of fairness?

***Fairness** sees a situation from the viewpoint of each person involved and not just our own. It seeks the best, just, equitable solution. It does not seek to please one over another, nor does it seek more than is needed. Fairness is not insisting on having our rights over someone else's. **Unfairness, Injustice** are the opposite. They cause us to act with prejudice towards others in our thinking and actions.*

LIVING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE – Working toward the greater good in the vineyard

Whether we have toiled in vineyard from dawn to dusk or joined our co-workers at sunset, our Father blesses us not because we have earned his goodness, but because of who He is. If we are grateful for what we have and what we are, we will then recognize God's generosity and His grace – and pass it on.

Put yourself in the vineyard:

- **As the worker at dawn: How did you feel when you were picked? When you got paid?**
- **As the workers who came at 5pm: How did you feel when you got called? When you got paid?**
- **As the owner: When you went seeking and as you encountered the idle laborers? When you paid them each the usual daily wage? When they questioned their paychecks?**

DISCUSS THE MINDSET when we say life is not fair – that's usually only a problem when we want more or don't get what we deserve. We don't complain when grace works in our favor.

DISCUSS THE CONSEQUENCES of thinking as man does in these matters. How do attitudes of unfairness, demands of justice, etc. work against the greater good?

DISCUSS THE "GOD WAY" that Pope Francis urges us to follow. Throughout *Laudato Si*, the pope writes that it will take a generous spirit to redeem earth, our shared inheritance, our common home. (LS-93)

- LS – 90:But we should be particularly indignant at the enormous inequalities in our midst, whereby we continue to tolerate some considering themselves more worthy than others. We fail to see that some are mired in desperate and degrading poverty, with no way out, while others have not the faintest idea of what to do with their possessions, vainly showing off their supposed superiority and leaving behind them so much waste which, if it were the case everywhere, would destroy the planet. In practice, we continue to tolerate that some consider themselves more human than others, as if they had been born with greater rights.
- LS – 91: A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings. ...
- LS – 92: Moreover, when our hearts are authentically open to universal communion, this sense of fraternity excludes nothing and no one.. We can hardly consider ourselves to be fully loving if we disregard any aspect of reality: "Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism".[70] Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God.

A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Oración cristiana con la creación

Dios de amor,
muéstranos nuestro lugar en este mundo
como instrumentos de tu cariño
por todos los seres de esta tierra,
porque ninguno de ellos está olvidado ante ti.
Ilumina a los dueños del poder y del dinero
para que se guarden del pecado de la indiferencia,
amen el bien común, promuevan a los débiles,
y cuiden este mundo que habitamos.
Los pobres y la tierra están clamando:
Señor, tómanos a nosotros con tu poder y tu luz,
para proteger toda vida,
para preparar un futuro mejor,
para que venga tu Reino
de justicia, de paz, de amor y de hermosura.
Alabado seas.
Amén.

- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home