

Read

Isaiah 55:6-9

Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9,
17-18

Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a

Matthew 20:1-16a

LIVING THE WORD

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 20, 2020



REFLECTION

God is generous in his love and care for all people. It knows no bounds. You might have heard that the Church teaches that there is a preferential option for the poor. This does not mean that God loves people who live in homes, with food in fridges any less. Rather, it means that we should adopt an attitude of compassion and support for those who have no one else to care for them—those on the outskirts of society, those who are persecuted by others no matter their background, those who have nothing. They deserve to be treated like human beings, worthy because they are also made in the image and likeness of God. We are also called to have a gracious and humble attitude. We give thanks for what we have been given, rather than grumbling like the first workers in today's Gospel reading. We should see the world through God's eyes, rather than our own.



ACTION

Reread the Gospel story for this week and pretend you are one of the vineyard workers. Let yourself feel the anger the worker speaks of at having to work the whole day and getting paid the same amount as someone who didn't work a full day. Now, reread it again, and this time be the worker who gets hired in the evening. How do you feel about getting a full day's wage? Reread the Gospel a final time. This time place yourself as the owner. What do you notice when you speak to your workers at the end of the day?



Check out these six tips to develop a more generous attitude: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/everyday-life/6-ways-to-be-a-more-generous-person/>

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How do you react to injustices? Do you react differently to those done to you than those done to others you do not know personally?
- ❖ How do you show gratitude to your family, your community, and to God?



September 20, 2020

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #133A

Isaiah 55:6-9

Psalms 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18

Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a

Matthew 20:1-16a

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus tells his followers another parable about God's unending mercy and forgiveness. The owner of the vineyard hires workers at different times throughout the day to work in his vineyard. At the end of the workday, the owner pays all the laborers the same amount of money, even if they began working later in the day than others. The first laborers hired see this as an injustice, yet Jesus tells us that it demonstrates God's acts as the fullness of justice. Jesus uses this parable to show that when it comes to God's mercy and forgiveness, there are no conditions on God's generosity.

Q FOCUS: *To realign our view of fairness to match God's vision of justice based on unrestricted love and mercy.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On September 21, we celebrate the feast of St. Matthew. We attribute the Gospel according to St. Matthew to this Apostle. Matthew was called by Jesus to leave his home and his work and to follow Christ (see Matthew 9:9-13). Matthew worked as a tax collector, which was not a reputable job in ancient times, which makes his call by Jesus even more significant. This is also an important feast for us to remember this year because our current liturgical year cycle, Year A, features Matthew's account of the Gospel. Each liturgical year features a different

Gospel and we have been hearing passages from this Gospel all summer and will continue to do so until Advent begins.

Church Teaching Connection

"Discovering that they are loved by God, people come to understand their own transcendent dignity, they learn not to be satisfied with only themselves but to encounter their neighbour in a network of relationships that are ever more authentically human" (*Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 4).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 20:1-16a

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

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.”

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

“Life isn’t fair!” Have you ever heard your mom or dad say those words to you, especially when you complain that something that happened to you is unfair? We spend much of our time comparing ourselves to others and comparing our life circumstances to others as well. It’s not fair that she is so pretty, that he is so smart, that their family lives in that extremely big house. Jesus tells a parable in today’s Gospel reading that we all can relate to. We have worked diligently on a project, we have studied hard, or we have practiced often for a sports game or band performance, and so we know what it feels to work hard for something that we want to achieve. When we work hard, we want to be rewarded, and so did

the laborers in the vineyard that day. They were out in the sun, working hard, so that they could earn a day’s wage. Yet those who joined their ranks later in the day also received the same pay.

► **How would you have felt if you were one of the laborers who had worked all day? Would you have been angry or felt cheated?**

With all parables, Jesus is teaching us the truth about God and helping us to see God’s nature. Jesus’ story demonstrates that God is generous to every person, no matter what they have done or how hard they have worked. God’s generosity extends to all people, even to those whom we might think do not deserve it. Jesus is teaching us that it might not make sense to us or seem fair at times, but this is who God is. We cannot change the nature of God, and we cannot argue with it. God is generous and loving all the time, to all people.

► **How have you experienced the generosity of God in your life? How have you experienced the generosity of others in your life?**

The notion that the last will be first, and the first will be last is an oft-quoted phrase from the Gospel. In many areas of our lives, we strive to be the best, to be first, or to win all the time. Yet Jesus teaches us an important lesson through this parable. The poor, the outcasts, those who struggle—all those who we might describe as the “last” or the “lowest,” are loved by God just as we are loved by God. They deserve the same generosity, love and care that we deserve. Even those who choose unwisely, who are mean, or who are difficult to be around, God is generous with them, just as God is generous with you. Jesus reminds us that part of living the Christian life is being humble and not drawing attention to ourselves and our accolades. This does not mean that we should not strive for excellence; we should give each task the attention it deserves and work with others to achieve goals. However, we must remember to give credit where credit is due; to God, for providing us with such gifts and talents so that we may share his love and generosity with others.

► **How does this competitive nature affect you? Do you compare yourself to others often? How do these comparisons affect you?**

► How can we balance doing well and receiving praise, while remaining humble?

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 30.

Humanity's understanding of fairness is not always the same as God's understanding of fairness.

Jesus uses this parable to demonstrate that God's generosity knows no limits; it is independent of one's achievements or perceived worth.

Where have you seen God's generosity in your life?

Act on the Word

Catholic Social Teaching

You will need to review and prepare the materials on Catholic Relief Services' website on Catholic social teaching: <https://www.crs.org/resource-center/CST-101>. This website offers many videos, discussion guides, and handouts on the seven themes of Catholic social teaching.

Based on the Church's understanding of God's loving, merciful, just, and forgiving nature, we are called to imitate his divine attitudes. This is the foundation for Catholic social teaching, which is the way in which the Church and its members put their faith in action as they interact with creation and the world. This way of life is not new, it is rooted in the earliest Christians communities as they recognized the needs of others and responded to them as Christ had taught. Using the resources found of Catholic Relief

Services' website, engage the teens in a discussion about Catholic social teaching by introducing them to (or reviewing) its seven key themes.

After discussing the seven principles of Catholic social teaching, divide the young people into three or four small groups. Assign each group one or two of the above principles to discuss together and to come up with concrete examples of organizations or services in your community to address that principle (pro-life organizations, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, local unions, environmental groups, food banks, etc.). Call the groups back to the large group to share what they have talked about. Guide the discussion by having the teens consider how these themes help us to live generously, just like God is generous to us. Consider participating as a group in one of these organizations.

Closing Prayer

God of the vineyard,

you see to all of our needs.

*May we not be envious because you are generous,
but rejoice with all as undeserving recipients
of your boundless mercy and forgiveness.*

*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.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.