

September 20, 2020

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 55:6-9

Phil 1:20C-24; 27A

Mt 20:1-16A

GROW: Today's parable about the workers in the vineyard reminds me of a popular paraphrase of a famous Theodore Roosevelt quote, "Envy is the thief of joy." No matter how much or how little we have, we can find someone who appears better off or happier, or appears to have received more than they deserve. Take, for example, the vineyard workers in today's Gospel. Those who arrived first for work were upset and envious, because the last to arrive were the first to be paid – and they were paid the same wages as those who had been *first* to arrive. Envy robbed the all-day workers of joy: joy in a job well-done and being paid the just wage due to them; joy in celebrating the generosity of the landowner, and of living in the kingdom of heaven begun here on earth, content with and grateful for everything God has provided for each one of us. Although envy may indeed be the thief of joy, joy can be ours when we appreciate what we have and quit comparing ourselves to others. It also frees us to share our gifts and truly walk with others through the ups and downs of our lives as we work together in God's vineyard.

GO: Today's parable has me thinking: When I feel envious of another's good fortune (sparkling clean house, teenaged boys who smile for photos), perhaps one way to counter that would be to talk through those feelings with God: "Help me be content with what I have. Thank you for the ways you have blessed my friends and me, and for the people in my life who hold me up in good times and bad." Just as the landowner was generous with the laborers, and God is immensely generous with us, let us make an effort this week to be generous in sharing the gifts in our lives with others. When we radiate gratitude and joy in our daily lives as Jesus' disciples, and let the Holy Spirit work through us in leading others to him, our witness to others will bear much fruit.

ACTION: Make a list of the gifts in our lives: Health, family, sparkly new earrings, a shiny lawn mower, you name it. Next, choose a "gift" you can share with others, and be specific: "I will make a card for Grandma today." "I will donate (fill in the blank) to the food and clothing pantry on Monday." "I will volunteer to be a greeter at Mass every other Sunday."