

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - YEAR A

Isaiah 55:6-9; Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a; Matthew 20:1-16a

Excerpts from Pope Francis – Angelus -24 September 2023

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Brothers and sisters, (...) today's Gospel presents us with a surprising parable. Ok, we might of remember the story, but it **still** surprises us. The master of a vineyard goes out from the first dawn until evening to call in some workers, **but** in the end, he pays everyone equally, even those who had only worked one hour. It would seem to be an injustice, but the parable is not to be read through wage criteria; rather, it intends to show us the criteria of God, who does not calculate our merits, but loves us as children.

Let us look more closely at **two divine actions** that emerge from the story. First, *God goes out at all hours to call us*. Second, *He repays everyone with the same “amount”*.

First, God is the one who *goes out at all hours to call us*. The parable says that the master “went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard”, but then continues to go out at various times of the day until sunset, to look for those whom no one had yet hired to work. We accordingly understand that in the parable, not only the labourers are the ones who work, but above all **God**, who goes out all day without tiring.

This is **how** God is: he does not wait for our efforts to come to us, he does not examine us to assess our merits before seeking us out, he does not give up if we are late in responding to him. On the contrary, he himself took the initiative and in Jesus “went out” — towards us, to show us his love. And he seeks us at all hours of the day, which represent the different stages and seasons of our life up to old age. For **his** heart, it is never too late; he always seeks us and awaits us. Yes, the Lord always seeks us and awaits us, always!

Precisely because he is so big-hearted, *God* — this is the second action — *repays everyone with the same “amount”*, which is his love. Here is the ultimate meaning of the parable: the labourers of the final hour are paid like the first because, in reality, God's justice is a superior justice. It goes further. Human justice says to “give to each his own according to what he deserves”, while God's justice does not measure love on the scales of our returns, our performance or our failures: **God just loves us**.

He loves us because we are his children, and he does so with an unconditional love, a love given freely.

Brothers and sisters, sometimes we risk having a “commercial” relationship with God, focusing more on **our** know-how than on his generosity and his grace.

Sometimes even as a Church, instead of going out at all hours of the day and extending our arms to all, we can feel like we are top of the class, judging others who are far away, without thinking that God loves them too with the same love he has for us. And even in our relationships, which are the fabric of society, the justice we practise sometimes fails to break free from the cage of calculation, and we limit ourselves to giving according to what we receive, without daring to go the extra mile, without counting on the effectiveness of good done freely and of love offered with a generosity of heart.

Do I, a Christian, know how to go out towards others?

Am I generous towards everyone?

Do I know how to give that extra understanding and forgiveness, as Jesus has **done** and does every day with me, with you?