



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 20th September 2026

The 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time — Matthew 20:1-16

Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.



Read

This Sunday's Gospel : THE GENEROSITY OF GOD



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 around, 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.'

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...



It is hard not to sympathize with the workers who have sweated it out right through the day in the hot sun. The idlers who have hardly got earth on their spades or grease on their hands get a great bonus and I get no bonus at all! Is this fair? No. God is not fair. You can't apply the concept of "fairness" to God at all. We can't enter into a reckoning with God. God does not calculate as we do. In the terms of this world, this is obvious enough. The wicked do prosper, while honesty and high moral standards, instead of being rewarded are often simply mocked. Can we go deeper and say that the reward is in heaven? This hardly fits with the way Jesus worked here on earth. He did not reward the virtuous. He said he was the doctor who had come to the sick. His favourites were the worst of society, tax-collectors and prostitutes, not even amiable rascals. Heaven was open to anyone who accepted him. It is no good looking for fairness in God, for this implies that we deserve something. We cannot claim to 'deserve' anything; we are simply called into a loving relationship and to put our trust in Jesus. **What does this Sunday's Gospel say about the generosity of God? When have you experienced God's generosity, his kindness and forgiveness in your own life?**

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.



Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit. You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.



Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **GENEROUS**
(To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)



As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



First Reading: *Rich in Forgiving*



Isaiah 55:6-9

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.

This is the triumphant conclusion of the second major section of the Book of Isaiah: God's ways are utterly different from human thinking. The passage is obviously chosen to be read in church this Sunday because it looks towards God's 'irresponsible' behaviour in the gospel. In many ways it is comforting to think that God is not like ourselves. One reason

why we cling to God is to be liberated from ourselves and to be brought into his marvellous light, living a life freed from the restrictions, frustrations and self-centredness that surrounds and penetrates us. Obviously God does not have our faults of selfishness, laziness, malice, lust and greed. More than that, not being bodily or limited in any way, God does not plan or think like ourselves. God does not think things out with 'Yes' and 'No', working in concepts or sentences. God does not laboriously plan what to do, weighing consequences, advantages and disadvantages! Even our love is always tinged with self-interest and concern for ourselves. God's love is entirely generous and out-going, a limitless cascade of love, deluging and penetrating each of us.

When do we love as God loves us?



Second Reading: *Life to Me is Christ*



Philippians 1:20-24.27

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.

This is the first of four Sunday readings from Paul's letter to the Philippians. They were his favourite community, linked to him with a strong bond of affection and intimacy, the only

*community from which he would accept gifts of money. Paul writes this letter from prison, not sure whether he is to live or die, not sure either which is his stronger desire. For life is his bond with the Christian communities he has founded, and which still need his help. But the centre of his life is the total rootedness in Christ, of which death can only be the completion. As he writes elsewhere, the Christian has been baptised into Christ's death, dipped into Christ's death, and so is soaked in Christ's death, waiting only for it to be completed in Christ's resurrection. If we really believe this with the strength of Paul's conviction, it gives a whole new centre to life, a whole new perspective on the life which is Christ's. Death will then not be a matter of fear and dread, but a bursting out of the limitations of this life into the glory of the resurrection. **What does it mean to be rooted in Christ?***

“ **The centre of his life is the
total rootedness in Christ.** ”

The Wednesday Word: Connecting Home, School and Parish through the Word of God