

Beloved in Christ, today's Gospel parable (Matt 20:1-16) reveals **God's justice**. God's justice is a matter of treating everyone with **respect, dignity and honor**. That is why we see the workers failing to understand why those who worked just one hour received the same wages as those who worked all day. The landowner in the parable understood human nature very well when he said, "why are you envious because I am generous?" (Matt 20:15) Those who worked hard in the heat all day were jealous of those who worked for only an hour and yet got the same pay. There is another way we may look at it; God has a perfect plan for your life. If others have more than you, it does not mean that God loves you less. God has special love for everyone. In the parable, the landowner - representing God, who called Jews and in His **gratuitous, unmerited invitation has called us Gentiles as well into the new people of God**. He does so out of love for both Jews and Gentiles with equal reward. Think of parents and children. Parents have a different relationship with each child but love each child. God deals differently with each of us because God loves each of us in the way that God knows best for us and his kingdom.

The first reading portrays God's righteousness and mercy. We were told that we must seek righteousness in order to receive the mercy of God. We heard of the Divine calling of the Lord God. Let the wicked forsake their way. Let the unrighteous forsake their thoughts. Return to the Lord! Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near (Is. 55:6). The thoughts of God are not the thoughts of man. The ways of God are not the ways of man. As the heavens are higher than the earth, the ways of God are higher than the ways of man and the thoughts of God are higher than the thoughts of man. The way of God is spiritual; the way of man consists of being worldly minded. In the Second Reading, St. Paul spoke of the righteousness of man. It is to live and die for Christ. True righteousness is persevering in the profession of faith that one proclaimed during the Sacrament of Baptism. **It is living with Christ, in Christ and through Christ, until one's last breath. Having** done so, one will not be put to shame in any way because Christ will have been exalted in every action, in life or in death.

From today's Gospel, we learned that God does not call everybody at the same time. Some are called early in life as they received their baptism as infants. Some were called as teenagers. Some were called during their married life and others, much later in life. Some are like the laborers who were called around five o'clock; their conversion took place at the hour. Naturally, the ones who are called early in life as the early laborers have a lot more persevering to do than the ones who are called during their last hour as the laborers who were called at five o'clock. I am not saying it is okay because some have to persevere longer than others for their salvation. I am saying it is okay because the salvation of the late laborers means a beautiful united family in the eternal Kingdom of God. We should not be like the laborers and grumble. Rather, we should rejoice! Those who grumble, they have a worldly mind, demanding to be paid for every minute of their labor. Those who rejoice have a spiritual mind, seeking the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. That is the difference between those who grumble and those who do not. They are not of the same mind.

Finally, dear friends, our reward is according to our spiritual works by the grace of God. If we have a heart that is disposed to serve the Lord, He will find spiritual work for us to do for the glory of His Kingdom. Seek righteousness and receive the mercy of God. Keeping in mind what has just been said, there is a lesson to learn from this. If we want to shine like stars forever and ever, we should not ask what the Church can do for us, but rather, **what can we do for the Church**. Jesus did not place angels on earth to evangelize. He placed us here, that is, you and me, as lights in the world so that His glory may be manifested through us. Let us do our best to live our life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that we will be counted among the last that will be first in His kingdom. Amen!