

Sermon

- ◆ **First Reading:** *Isaiah 55:6-9*
- ◆ **Second Reading:** *Philippians 1:20-24,27*
- ◆ **Gospel:** *Matthew 20:1-6*

WHY BE ENVOIOUS BECAUSE I AM GENEROUS ;

The Gospel reading to-day is also referred to as the parable of the workers(...have you read it??.) where all the workers receive the same wage, though not all of them had done a full day's work ;

In the parable the scene is set for a show of great generosity, but also for grumbling and discontentment, let's see what we can grasp?

The owner of the vineyard goes out in the early morning in search of workers to work in his vineyard ; "early morning" could mean at 6a.m. or 7a.m. He goes out again at 10a.m., 12 noon, and once again at 3 in the afternoon, obviously the need for workers was urgent.

Then between 4.30 - 5.00 he calls his manager and tells him to pay the workers, but let's be clear on one thing! Those who started work in the early morning had already agreed to a fixed wage, that was a mutual agreement with the owner of the vineyard ; trouble was about to commence! While being paid, the early starters thought they would be receiving more than what they agreed on, they didn't, so they complained **WHY AREN'T WE GETTING MORE THAN THE ONES WHO ONLY WORKED FOR AN HOUR?** (...a perfectly justified enquiry!!...) so the owner replies **I AM NOT BEING UNFAIR TO YOU, DID WE NOT AGREE ON A FIXED WAGE?, TAKE YOUR EARNINGS AND GO**" then he says **WHY BE ENVOIOUS BECAUSE I AM GENEROUS?"**

The owner of the vineyard represents God the Heavenly Father who, ultimately, is the owner of life and all good life giving things that exist.

The vineyard is the vineyard of life, the world ; the workers are all of us, the family of mankind ; This parable, like all the parables, helps us to grasp the nature of God ; the clue in this parable of the workers, is where the owner says **WHY BE ENVOIOUS BECAUSE I AM GENEROUS?**

In our contemporary society with so many labour laws, an issue of this nature would be brought before a trade union tribunal^{***}, but then we'd miss the point of this parable, there's something else to be learned here ; GOD HOLY SPIRIT distributes his gifts generously and abundantly among his people everywhere ;

He distributes rain, sunshine, the four seasons of the year ; He makes crops grow and provides for all that we need in due season, as we pray in the Our Father **"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD"** .

GOD HOLY SPIRIT distributes the talents that each of us need in order to get by and earn a living ; Therefore we should be grateful to the Heavenly Provider for seeing to our needs as we pass thru' this world as pilgrims ; We must never grumble nor complain AGAINST the Owner of Life ;

All sorts of problems arise in the hearts of people when they don't recognize the blessings that have been freely given to them ; Good health is a great blessing, peace of mind is a blessing, also to have a good friend, education, clean water to drink, a bed to sleep in, a roof over your head etc., these are all blessings, BUT WE ARE OBLIGED TO SHARE OUR BLESSINGS ; what can we do with the blessing of good health? We can always help those who suffer from bad health.....help them in some small way without expecting anything in return ; IF the Owner of the vineyard/the lord-of-Life has been generous with his workers, then, as believers, we are equally bound to be generous with the things that God has given to you and to me, and then to constantly EXPRESS THANKSGIVING _____

A 2nd point ^{***}_things go shockingly wrong and very unfair when what we are denied what is rightfully ours, such as a FAIR WAGE ;

Corporate greed, cunning business deals, corruption and the gross abuse of power has robbed vast amounts of workers all over the world of their right to a decent wage and a decent way of life ; how is it that Zimbabwe was once referred to as "the bread basket of Africa"?, over 40 years ago this country was reduced to misery ; Russia should be a thriving empire with enough for everyone, ask the average Russian "is your country a little corrupt? "NO!, it's TOTALLY corrupt!" ; where fair wages are concerned the U.K. also has it's shadow side! How is it that nurses still receive a pittance of a wage while doctors who also work just as hard, receive a much higher salary?? A number of years ago "Burger King" was investigated for how they were paying their workers, workers would only receive a wage based on the number of customers they served, not on the number of hours they spent as workers on the premises ; a parishioner, former worker of Marks & Spencer informed me "father, I had to finally hand in my notice, management treated us with so much contempt"!! ;

In my own case as a former postal worker during the 70's in Dublin, we were shown little or no respect in the workplace, they would shout at us "HEY YOU!!", followed by some irrelevant order to get things done at a faster pace, but really they were only showing off their higher grade and even higher ignorance!

Indeed there are many more instances of the abuse of workers in their places of work, how about those who have no option but TO GRIN AND BEAR IT!?? then there are many right now in this present Pandemic who are wondering about having any type of job as the furlough scheme draws to a close next month ; SO IN ALL THAT, WE HAVE A LOT TO PRAY FOR BETWEEN NOW AND THE MONTHS AHEADstay healthy.....

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