



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 24 September 2017

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters,
Good morning!

In today's Gospel reading (cf Mt 20:1-16) there is the parable of the day labourers in the vineyard, which Jesus recounts in order to explain two aspects of the Kingdom of God: the first is that God wants to call everyone to work for his Kingdom; the second is that, in the end, he wants to give everyone the same reward, that is, salvation, eternal life.

The owner of the vineyard who represents God, goes out at dawn and hires a group of workers, agreeing with them on the day's wages. It was a fair wage. Then he goes out again [several times] later in the day — he goes out five times on that day — until the late afternoon to hire other unemployed labourers whom he sees. At the end of the day, the landowner orders that a denarius be paid to everyone, even to those who had only worked for a few hours. Naturally, the labourers who were hired first complain because they see that they are paid as much as those who worked for fewer hours. The landowner however, reminds them about what had been agreed; if he then wants to be generous with the others, they should not be envious.

In reality, this “injustice” of the owner serves to provoke in those listening to the parable a qualitative leap because here Jesus does not want to speak about the issue of work or of a fair wage, but about the Kingdom of God! And this is the message: there are no unemployed people in the Kingdom of God. Everyone is called to do their part; and there will be a reward from divine justice for everyone in the end — not from human [justice], luckily! —, but the salvation that Jesus

Christ acquired for us with his death and Resurrection, a salvation which is not deserved, but donated — salvation is free — thus, “the last will be the first and the first last” (Mt 20:16).

With this parable, Jesus wants to open our hearts to the logic of the Father’s love which is free and generous. It is about allowing oneself to be astonished and fascinated by the “thoughts” and the “ways” of God which, as the Prophet Isaiah recalls, are not our thoughts and not our ways (cf Is 55:8). Human thoughts are often marked by selfishness and personal advantages, and our narrow and contorted paths are not comparable to the wide and straight streets of the Lord. He uses mercy — do not forget this: He uses mercy —, he forgives broadly, is filled with generosity and kindness which he pours forth on each of us. He opens for everyone the boundless territory of his love and his grace, which alone can give the human heart the fullness of joy.

Jesus wants to make us contemplate the gaze of that landowner: the gaze with which he looks upon each of the labourers searching for work and calls them to go to his vineyard. It is a gaze which is filled with attention, kindness. It is a gaze which calls, invites one to get up and begin a journey because he wants life for each of us; he wants a full, committed life, safe from emptiness and inertia. God excludes no one and wants each of us to achieve his or her fullness. This is the love of our God, of our God who is Father.

May Mary Most Holy help us welcome into our lives the logic of love which frees us from the presumption of deserving God’s reward and from the critical judgement of others.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters,

Yesterday in Oklahoma City (United States of America), Stanley Francis Rother, missionary priest, killed in hatred of the faith for his evangelizing work and human advancement in favour of the poorest in Guatemala, was beatified. May his heroic example help us to be brave witnesses of the Gospel, committing ourselves to uphold the dignity of mankind.

My heartfelt greeting goes to all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims from different countries. In particular, I greet the choir from the Italian Catholic Mission in Bern, Rome’s community, “Communion and Liberation” and the faithful from Villadossola, Offanengo and Nola.

I wish everyone a Happy Sunday. And please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.
Arrivederci!

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