



**Wednesday 18th August 2021**  
**20th Week in Ordinary Time Year 1**

**Gospel**

**Mt 20:1-16**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

*Are you jealous because I am generous?*

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 round, 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. 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.'

**Reflection By Fr John Lovell**

If we had to sum up the message in today's Gospel parable, I think it might well be, "God's ways are not our ways".

If any landowner in any of our advanced nations nowadays did what the owner in today's parable did, I think he would very quickly end up in an industrial relations court, be vilified in the media and have his resources stripped away in order to pay lost wages to those he was deemed to have exploited, regardless of what he and his employees had agreed to beforehand.

"God's ways are not our ways".

Similar grievances have, and still are, levelled by many unbelievers at God, the Owner of the Kingdom, the Spiritual Vineyard. Little wonder a disgruntled humanity crucified His Son, the one who taught us this parable. Like the 'Good Thief' who was crucified alongside Jesus, anyone who sincerely repents, even with their last breath, and regardless of the magnitude of their sins, will be forgiven. To many people this type of justice is simply not fair and they won't abide a God who won't throw sinners into prison until they pay back the last cent of what they owe to those they have wronged.

So, what justification does God have for letting repentant sinners off so easily and welcoming them joyfully into everlasting happiness? His justification is He has already paid everyone's debt countless times over through His own passion and death on the Cross. This is what we call the Good News that gives every Christian cause to rejoice. So let's all begin today to imitate the Lord's great generosity in also

forgiving anyone who has wronged us. And for those in our world who do not believe in forgiveness, let's pray they will receive the grace to unhardened their hearts, confess their sins and accept the Lord's mercy and healing in their lives.