

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily  
Sunday, September 24, 2023  
Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Cycle A

In our gospel today, Jesus tells the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. It is a difficult parable because of the seeming injustice done by the landowner, who hired laborers for his vineyard at different times of the day. However, at the end of the day, everyone received the same wage equivalent to the daily wage. Jesus constructed the parable in such a way that those who are hired the earliest would know it by letting the landowner attend first to those who were hired the latest. Naturally, those who were hired first complained. The landowner claimed to just being generous.

God is generous as well as just. From the very start, the landowner was clear. He agreed with those he hired regarding the wages and he gave them the required wage at that time. While the first ones worked longer hours compared to the others, they were given a just wage. To the others, the landowner chose to be generous. The wages stand for God's graces. He will give us the grace that will satisfy our needs. How long we have prayed, been faithful, or been good, do not necessarily determine the grace we will be given. Besides, we ought to see that, being good, faithful, and prayerful are already graces in themselves. Thus, those who will become worthy later will not be deprived of the fullness of God's graces.

This should be clearer in terms of salvation. There is no such thing as conditional or partial salvation. It is either you are saved or not. Jesus made mention of prostitutes, murderers, and other sinners, who will be saved ahead of the religious leaders because they repented while the Pharisees and scribes continue to be hypocrites. One who repents will receive the fullness of salvation.

Do you think it's unfair? To us, it may seem so. Those who will repent after a long life of sinfulness, will also receive the same grace of salvation as those who have lived well and in God's favor. But to God, He is just being generous. However, upon closer scrutiny, we should see that living a good life is already a grace. Living in sin is to be deprived of graces. We should be happy knowing that even if we had to live a life of sin, we can still receive the fullness of salvation. Who knows, the one who was hired last may be us or anyone we love. Thus, instead of complaining, we ought to be thankful that God is generous.

My dear friends always remember: God always gives us more than we are entitled to; he always forgives us of our sins more than we ever deserve; and he always blesses us with more than we are worthy of. For indeed His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are our ways His ways.