

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year A - 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

A resource for personal, family
and community prayer.



“...the last will be first, and the first, last.”

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

¹ Jesus told this parable to his disciples: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. ² He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard.

³ Going out at about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place⁴ and said to them, “You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage.” ⁵ So they went.

At about the sixth hour and again at about the ninth hour, he went out and did the same.

⁶ Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing

You are invited to read the
Gospel passage attentively,
respectfully and reverently
as a gift of God.



round, and he said to them, “Why have you been standing here idle all day?”

⁷ “Because no-one has hired us,” they answered. He said to them, “You go into my vineyard too.”

⁸ 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.”

⁹ So those who were hired at about the

For more information check out <https://lectio.newrydominican.com> which includes this week's Sunday Gospel podcast Living the Word - Meditate on the Way. Also available on all other podcast platforms.

eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each. ¹⁰When the first came, they expected to get more, but they too received one denarius each. ¹¹They took it, but grumbled to the landowner. ¹²“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 the heat.”

¹³He answered one of them and said, “My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? ¹⁴Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the last-comer as much as I pay you. ¹⁵Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?”

¹⁶Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.’

Reading

In this parable Jesus challenges his disciples to open their minds and hearts to a greater understanding of God’s all encompassing, all embracing love - a love that is for all his children.

The parable tells about workers being hired by the landowner. At that time day-labourers were among the lowest in society. They had no security, lived from day to day and depended on being hired by a landowner. One denarius would have been sufficient to feed a family for a day. The working day was long - usually twelve hours. If there was no work, there was no food on the table. So the generous-hearted landowner made no difference - he paid everyone the same. What mattered to

him was that everyone got the chance to live with dignity.

As stressed in the parable, God’s love is not something that has to be earned or merited but can only be received as gift.

Recognising

You are invited to meditate on the passage, or any part of it, by letting it speak to your life experience until you feel to say “I recognise this passage.”

v3. “You go and work in my vineyard too”
Can you remember an experience when you or your community made a deliberate and purposeful choice to welcome all regardless of merit, status, race or cultural identity, seeking to ensure that everyone would feel at home, valued and cherished?

Or
Can you remember having been, or seen, the “landowner” in the Gospel who is always on the lookout for the last, the least and the lost, making sure no one gets left behind?

v9. “So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each”

Can you remember an experience of having been “an eleventh hour worker” and your self confidence and self worth were at an all-time low? You encountered the landowner in the Gospel who reached out to you with deep compassion and kindness.

Remember at that time the person who gave

you the “one denarius” and their generosity of spirit filled you with a deep sense of gratitude and humility.

v12. “have done only one hour’s work, and you have treated them the same.”

Can you identify with the early morning workers who “had done a hard day’s work in all the heat” and who “grumbled to the landowner?” You felt that you didn’t get what you thought you deserved, and were “envious” of others whom you reckoned didn’t work as hard but had received much more than you felt they deserved.

v15. “Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?”

Can you remember an experience of generosity in someone that challenged your sense of fairness or entitlement?

Responding

Having recognised God’s presence in life, you are invited to **respond** in your own words, in prayer (thanksgiving, repentance and petition).

Thank you, Father, for the people in my life who have opened my eyes to discover the generous and gratuitous nature of your love. They showed me the same acceptance, respect and love whether I showed up at “daybreak” or the “third”, “sixth” or “ninth hour”, even the “eleventh hour”.

Father, for the times that I have thought of you as an aloof or distant judge who observes closely our human behaviour and doles out punishment or reward, I ask forgiveness. Lord, have mercy.

We ask you, Father, that as individuals, church or society we will remember and act in a way that shows that all human lives matter regardless of race, religion, nationality, status, rank or achievement. Make us sensitive and more compassionate to the marginalised, abandoned and rejected in our society.

Resting

You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply **resting** your heart in God’s presence (Contemplative moment). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness, e.g. “**My friend**”.

Reflecting

From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to **reflect**, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (Wisdom moment).

From your journey with this passage, what new insight has been given to you into the meaning of love... or generosity or dignity... or judging others?

A generous heart comes from the deep understanding of the needs of others.



Children

Reading

Jesus shares that each one of us has a role to play in building God's kingdom of love. Jesus reminds us that God, the Father loves each one of us equally and will reward us generously for the work of love that we do. God rewards us for the quality rather than the quantity of our loving service.

Recognising

Can you remember meeting a 'Jesus' person who encouraged you to do your bit to build a more loving world - maybe a parent, grandparent or teacher?

Can you remember a time, maybe at home, in school or in a sports club, when you felt underappreciated or unfairly treated after putting in a lot of work and someone else who did less got the same praise as you?

Responding

Father, I thank You for the 'Jesus' people in my life who encourage me to be a reflection of Your generous love in the world through my words and actions towards the people I meet.

Father, I ask forgiveness for the times that I have been ungenerous and wanted others to be treated unequally or felt jealous of the equal praise that other people received for doing less than me.

Father, I ask for the grace to be able to work to the best of my ability to build up Your kingdom on earth and, by my example, encourage others that I meet to do likewise.

Resting

Rest in the loving embrace of the Father by repeating "I AM GENEROUS" for as long as it is possible. May your heart be filled with generous love as you are drawn deeper into the Father's presence.

Reflecting

Life is about the quality of generous love that you offer rather than the amount of reward or praise you receive.

A simple summary of Lectio steps can be found in the porch of the church.