

Religious Education

Twenty-fifth Sunday of the Year

Week beginning 20th September 2026 Year A

Workers in the vineyard

Gospel Reading: Matthew 20:1-15

Gospel Reflection:

This week, the readings focus on God's generosity, even if it is sometimes difficult for us to accept that God's ways are not our ways.

In the **First Reading**, Isaiah encourages the people of Israel to seek the Lord and turn to him, so that they can experience his forgiveness and compassion.

The **Psalms** promises kindness and mercy to all who call on the Lord.

St Paul (**Second Reading**) speaks of his dilemma. He wants to be with Christ, but also realises that he is needed on earth to continue to preach the Gospel around him. Of two good things, he chooses the better: that is, to remain alive for the sake of the new Christians.

The **Gospel** further illustrates that God's ways are not our ways, and that God's generosity is without bounds. Here, Jesus tells the parable of the vine workers: all will be paid the same amount, regardless of the number of hours they have spent in the field. This story helps us understand that in God's eyes, those who turned to God later in life are worth just as much as those who have followed him from the beginning.

In our prayer this week, we may like to meditate further on God's unconditional love and generosity for us all, and remind ourselves that his ways are not our ways.

Introduction:

Not everyone comes to know Jesus early in their lives, for some it might happen only at the end of a lifetime. But Jesus is loving and generous, and today we learn that those who follow him will receive the same reward at the end of time – everlasting life.

Sorry:

Listen to this story written by a wise man called Micah (Micah 6:8-9). God our Father has told us what we must do: be fair and honest in all we do and say; be loving and caring towards others. If we offer this, then our friendship with God will last forever. Listen to the words of this prayer:

Forgive, us Lord, when we have let you down, when we have forgotten that whatever we have done to others, we have done to you. Fill us with the spirit of your love and goodness, so that we can change our hearts and try again.

Gospel reading: Matthew 20: 1-15:

Jesus told his disciples this parable:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire labourers for his vineyard.

After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o'clock, the landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.' So, they went off.

And he went out again around noon, and around three o'clock, and did likewise.

Going out about five o'clock, the landowner found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?'

They answered, 'Because no one has hired us.'

He said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard.'

When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Summon the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.'

When those who had started about five o'clock came, each received the usual daily wage.

So, when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage.

And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and the heat.'

He said to one of them in reply, 'My friend, I am not cheating you.

Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?

Take what is yours and go.

What if I wish to give this last one the same as you?

Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money?

Are you envious because I am generous?'

Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Gospel Reflection: Matthew 20:1–15

The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard cuts straight to the heart of our human struggle with fairness and grace. For anyone who has ever worked a long, exhausting day only to see someone else get rewarded the same amount for doing a fraction of the work, this story feels deeply unsettling.

We naturally live by a system of strict merit: you get what you earn, and you deserve what you work for. The first workers hired calculated their worth by their hours, sweat, and endurance. When they received the exact same daily wage (a denarius) as those who worked for just one hour, they felt cheated.

However, the landowner did not cheat them. He paid them exactly what they agreed upon. Their anger did not stem from being underpaid, but from seeing others treated with a level of **generosity that defied human logic**.

This parable reminds us that **God's grace is not an economy**. We cannot earn a higher status in the Kingdom of Heaven through our longevity, heritage, or hard work. If God operated on a system of strict human fairness, none of us would qualify for His mercy.

The denarius represents salvation and God's love—gifts so immense they cannot be divided into fractions. Whether someone has served God their entire life or turns to Him in their final hour, the reward of eternal life is the same. God does not love us based on our productivity.

The climax of the story comes with the landowner's piercing question: *"Are you envious because I am generous?"*

It is easy to look at the blessings, spiritual gifts, or forgiveness given to others and feel a sense of resentment. This parable challenges us to shift our perspective. Instead of comparing our workload or rewards to those around us, we are called to rejoice that we have a Master who is radically kind, abundant, and deeply invested in ensuring that *everyone* has enough.

What do you think the message is in this story?

Jesus is like the vineyard owner, going out looking for us, his workers and giving us the chance to come and join him. Even if we arrive 'late in the day', and take a long time in our lives to come to know him, we will all receive the same reward, everlasting life with him in heaven.

Prayer:

"O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbour, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever." Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE:

Let us continue praying for peace in the world, remembering especially all the troubled parts of the world, the people, places and countries suffering from political or economic unrest and war.

We place our intentions under the mantle of Our Blessed Mother, the Queen of Peace.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection,
implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee,
O Virgin of virgins, my mother. To thee do I come,
before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy
hear and answer me. Amen. Our Lady, Queen of Peace,
pray for us.

'The God Who Speaks'

Therefore, we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them? This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the Day of Judgment: In this world, we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. However, perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. **(1 John 4:16-18).**

Rome Pilgrimage:

This week, a group of our students are taking part in a pilgrimage to Rome, journeying to the heart of the Catholic Church. During their visit, they will have the opportunity to explore many of the city's historic and sacred sites, including St Peter's Basilica and other places of great religious significance.

The pilgrimage is a wonderful opportunity for students to deepen their faith, learn more about the history and traditions of the Catholic Church, and experience the rich culture of one of the world's most important cities.

We keep all our students and staff in our prayers as they travel and look forward to hearing about their experiences when they return.

Parents should also look out for information that will be sent out shortly regarding next year's Rome pilgrimage. We will be seeking expressions of interest from families whose children may wish to take part in this exciting and spiritually enriching opportunity during the next academic year.

Please keep our pilgrims in your prayers as they represent our school community in Rome this week.

"May the Lord watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."
(Psalm 121:8)