25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
MATTHEW 20:1-16a

Today’s readings are all about the human sense of justice contrasted with the extravagant grace of a merciful and compassionate God. God rewards us, not in the measure of what we do, but according to our need and His good will. In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah reminds the exiles in Babylon that their God is more merciful than they are, and more forgiving. He is ready to pardon the infidelity which has resulted in their exile. Their merciful God will bless them with material and spiritual blessings. Today’s Responsorial Psalm (Ps 145) reminds us that, although “the Lord is just in all his ways,” He is at the same time “gracious and merciful.” In the second reading, Paul offers himself as an example of total submission, aided by God’s grace, to His will. Paul is ready to live continuing his mission, or to die and join the Lord, whichever is God’s will. There is Gospel or Good News in today’s Gospel parable. Today’s Gospel tells us that it’s never too late for God. A full wage is offered to each of us, whether one has served Him for a whole lifetime, or has turned to Him only at the eleventh hour. This story of the landlord’s love and generosity represents God’s love and generosity to us. The story shows us how God looks at us, sees our needs, and meets those needs. The question in God’s mind is not, “How much do these people deserve?” but, “How can I help them? How can I save them before they perish?” It is all about grace and blessings. God’s provisions for our spiritual lives will never run out, and when we share our blessings with others, we tap into the inexhaustible Divine supply.

We need to follow God’s example and show grace to our neighbor. When someone else is more successful than we are, let us assume, that person needs it. When someone who does wrong fails to get caught, let us remember the many times we have done wrong and gotten off free. We must not wish pain on people for the sake of fairness, nor rejoice in their miseries when God allows them to suffer. We become envious of others because of our lack of generosity of heart. Envy should have no place in our lives. We cannot control, and dare not pass judgment on, the way God blesses others, only rejoice that He does so, just as He blesses us.

We need to express our gratitude to God in our daily lives. God personally calls each of us to our own ministry and shows us His care by giving us His grace and eternal salvation. To God, we are more than just numbers on a payroll. Our call to God’s vineyard is a free gift from Him for which we can never be sufficiently thankful. All our talents and blessings are freely given by God. Hence, we should express our gratitude to God by avoiding sins, by rendering loving service to others, by sharing our blessings with the needy, and by constant prayer, listening and talking to God at all times.

We need to practice generosity. We can be generous in the way we give someone encouragement and a kind word when that person is feeling down, even though that person might not be one of our best buddies. We can be generous in the way we give of our time to help someone going through a rough patch. When someone says something that offends us, we can be generous in our reaction, sympathize and understand, rather than give back the hostility or injury just as it was given to us. When we have fallen out with someone or believe we have been unfairly treated, we can be generous in our willingness to reach out, make amends and restore friendships. When someone really annoys us and gets under our skin, we can be generous with our patience and kindness, dealing with that person in a way that reflects the generous nature of God. When we see people who lack the bare necessities needed for a happy and healthy life, we need to be generous with what we have been given by our generous God.