

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)



Matthew 20:1-16

'Do you begrudge my generosity?'

At that time: Jesus told his disciples this parable, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market-place, and to them he said, "You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you." So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, "Why do you stand here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You go into the vineyard too."

'And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the labourers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first." And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?" So the last will be first, and the first last.'

Reflection

It can be hard when someone receives the same reward as us, especially when we feel we have worked harder or been around for longer. In this parable, the workers become focused on what they think they deserve rather than celebrating the generosity shown to others.

Jesus challenges us to move away from comparison and towards generosity. In a Vincentian community, we don't serve others because we want recognition or because we think we deserve more than someone else. We serve because every person has dignity and is worthy of being treated with love.

Sometimes someone might need more support than we do, or someone who has only just joined the group might make a huge contribution. Instead of asking, "Why them?", Jesus invites us to ask, "How can I help?"

Materials needed

- Pile of sweets/tokens/counters

Activity

Give the group a small pile of sweets, counters or tokens and ask them to divide them between five people:

- Someone who has volunteered every week for a year
- Someone who has only just joined
- Someone who has done one really difficult task
- Someone who has helped quietly behind the scenes
- Someone who hasn't contributed yet but would like the chance to get involved

Ask the group how they would divide the tokens and why. Then reveal that in Jesus' parable, everyone receives the same. Discuss: "How would you feel if you had worked hard for longer, but someone who had just joined received exactly the same as you?"



Call to Action

This week, notice when you are comparing what you have with someone else, and choose generosity instead.