

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY-CYCLE A

Whenever our dear Lord told a parable, there was always, always, a little “zinger” at the end to grab the disciples’ (and our) attention. Almost always the zinger was at odds with most would call ‘normal’ attitudes. Parables have a way of doing that you know.

Let’s look at today’s Gospel. If we find ourselves slightly, or even more than slightly irritated at Jesus’ story, then we need to ask ourselves “what is it that irritates me?” “Why am I irritated with the parable?”

Am I angry because the owner in the parable is generous; more generous than I would ever be or than I would want him to be to others BUT not to me? Could be. If so, it means that I AM the one with the problem; NOT the owner and by extension, NOT God.

What is most striking about the landowner is the relentless way he himself goes out to find laborers, five different times; his willingness to hire the “rejects,” and his desire to pay them a full day’s wage.

Jesus tells us that the Kingdom of Heaven is just like the landowner. The love of God takes the initiative in seeking US out; time after time after time. The love of God is lavish in its self-gift to us, despite our utter unworthiness; our being “rejects.”

The great temptation for us all is to measure our life and “the way things should be” by the world’s standards; not God’s. As Isaiah said today: “My ways are not your ways, says the Lord.” We need all remember what the parable of the laborers in the vineyard teaches. It is not about unfair labor policies. It is a parable of the Kingdom of Heaven and it teaches us that, as WE have received much, so must we give.

Our Lord is inviting us to look into ourselves, into our competitiveness, our envy, our greed, our feelings of superiority and yes, our levels of generosity and kindness and remember that we are all children of God; equally dependent on His love and His generosity.

Eternal life is a gift from God. It is NOT owed to us, nor is it earned by us. It does not come cheaply; it CAN be lost. So before we get all hot and bothered about what is “fair” and not “fair,” let’s remember the zinger: as you have been given much, so must you give. Not a bad deal really!

AMEN. MICHAEL, '08.