

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us the parable of the workers in the vineyard. The landowner goes out early in the morning to hire workers. Then, at different times throughout the day, he goes out again: at nine o'clock, at noon, at three o'clock, and even at five o'clock. Each time, he finds people standing there and says: "You also go into my vineyard."

There is something interesting about the people who were still standing there at five o'clock. When the landowner asks them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" they answer, "Because no one has hired us." They were available, but they were not engaged. They were standing there, waiting, while the day was passing. This is where the Gospel speaks very strongly to us: God does not want us simply to stand around. God calls us to enter His vineyard. God calls us to become fruitful.

Sometimes God is persistent and He keeps coming to us, to call us again and again. Perhaps we did not respond yesterday. Perhaps we missed an opportunity in the past. Perhaps we thought we were too young, too old, too busy, too tired, too ordinary, or not good enough. But God comes again and says: "You also go into my vineyard." "Go!" That is an invitation to action. God has given each of us something to offer: the time, the ability, the experience, the relationships, the opportunities, the faith, and even our weaknesses. God wants to use what He has given us for His Kingdom.

Sometimes we become comfortable doing nothing. We tell ourselves: "Someone else will do it." "I have already done enough." "It is not my responsibility." "I am too old." "I am too young." "I don't know enough." Slowly, idleness becomes a habit. Idleness is not simply having nothing to do. Sometimes idleness is having something meaningful to do and choosing not to do it.

The vineyard is right in front of us. There may be a person who needs encouragement; the vineyard is wherever God has placed us. There may be a family that needs our presence; someone who needs forgiveness; someone who needs guidance; a neighbour who is lonely;



a parish that needs our participation; a person who needs to hear about God's love. To us, God says: “You also go into my vineyard.”

The First Reading gives us another important dimension: “Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.” In other words, do not postpone your response to God. We often think: “I will do it later.” I will pray later. I will reconcile later. I will serve later. I will call that person later. I will become more involved later. But we do not know how many more ‘laters’ we might have in our lives. The workers in the Gospel were called at different hours. Some entered the vineyard early; others entered at the last hour. This shows us that God's invitation does not have an expiry time as long as we are alive; neither should we presume that we have unlimited time. Every day is another opportunity to become fruitful.

There is one more important point in today's Gospel. The workers who came at different times all received from the generosity of the landowner. This reminds us that God's ways are not our ways. As Isaiah says: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways.”

Like the workers in the parable, we may compare ourselves with others and say: “I have worked longer.” “I have sacrificed more.” “Why did that person receive the same?” But Jesus turns our attention away from comparison and toward generosity. The question is not: “What did the other person receive?” The question is: “What am I doing with the invitation God has given me?”

Brothers and sisters, God is still coming into the vineyard. He comes early in the morning. He comes at midday. He comes in the afternoon. And sometimes He comes even at the last hour of our lives. His invitation remains the same: “You also go into my vineyard.”

Let us not remain idle when God is calling us to be fruitful. Let us not waste the gifts, time, opportunities, and relationships He has placed in our hands. May our life become fruitful, not for our own glory, but for God's glory and for the good of others.