

This Sunday we celebrate the Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

The Gospel (*Matthew 20:1-16*) is the parable of the workers in the vineyard.

The landowner hires the workers at different times of the day. At the end of the day he pays them all the same, no matter whether they have worked all day or only one hour.

As the world sees it, this is unfair. But “my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who speaks.” (*from the first reading, Isaiah 55:6-9*).

It is really very good news. “Our God who is rich in forgiving” will accept anyone, whenever they turn to him. We can become the Lord’s worker at any time in our lives. And we will be accepted, loved, forgiven. And we will receive the same reward as everyone else.

The parable also tells a deep truth. Salvation is all or nothing. You are either hired or not, in or out. It’s a binary result: one or zero. Heaven is not measured out on a sliding scale or a balance sheet. We only have to turn and ask, and we will be let in.

“The last will be first, and the first last”. God upends our worldly calculations. Never mind the past. God calls us today to enter his vineyard. It is never too late.