Suggested Opening Song: Joyful, Joyful We Adore You, #197

This Sunday we begin a series of three Gospels set in vineyards. Today's Gospel tells of a generous landowner, willing to pay a full daily wage even to those who worked only the final hour of the day. They are very happy, of course, but the folks who labored all day in the hot sun resent the owner's extreme generosity. This, Jesus tells his disciples, can be compared to the kingdom of heaven, where "the last will be first, and the first will be last." Let us praise and thank God for inviting us all—first, last, and in-between—to the joyful kingdom.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 142
I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow as we say*) ***and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*** **For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Introductory Rite:
Greeting:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 10
Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:
O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and our neighbor, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 92
A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah *Isaiah 55:6-9*

Seek the LORD while he may be found, call him while he is near. Let the scoundrel forsake his way, and the wicked his thoughts; let him turn to the LORD for mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 145: 2-3, 8-9, 17-18*
R/. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.
R/. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

Every day I will bless you, and I will praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the LORD and highly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable. **R/.**

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works. **R/.**

The LORD is just in all his ways and holy in all his works.
The LORD is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth. **R/.**

Second Reading
A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians *Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a*

Brothers and sisters: Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me life is Christ, and death is gain. If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, for that is far better. Yet that I remain in the flesh is more necessary for your benefit.

Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel *Matthew 20:1-16a*
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew **Glory to you, Lord**

Jesus told his disciples this parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o’clock, the landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.’ So they went off. And he went out again around noon, and around three o’clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o’clock, the landowner found others standing around, and said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard.’ When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.’ When those who had started about five o’clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day’s burden and the heat.’ He said to one of them in reply, ‘My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?’ Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reflection on the Word:

- You can almost hear laborers who worked all day crying out, "It's not fair!" They're right, of course. It really isn't fair. They worked a lot longer and a lot harder and at the end of the day received the same amount. Even viewed from the landowner's perspective, it's wrongheaded. Who is going to volunteer to work all day the following day, knowing that they could show up with an hour to go and get the same pay? But, as the landowner says, he did not cheat anyone. The dedicated workers received exactly what they were promised: a just wage. The landowner's generosity to the latecomers doesn't change the amount they received at all, which is what they agreed to in the first place. Yet, while the latecomers feel grateful, the others feel envy and resentment.

- But remember how Jesus begins his parable. He compares the kingdom of heaven not to any of the workers, but to the landowner. The generosity of the landowner illustrates the kingdom, not the reaction of any of the workers. God is generous beyond expectation, beyond reason, beyond fairness. We are the workers, the recipients of God's generosity. We are all sinners. We all have sinned against God and against others. We all have needed forgiveness. Like the latecomers in the parable, we are unworthy of the reward we will receive. But in God's infinite mercy, we are all able to receive the ultimate reward.

- We are called to increase the generosity in our hearts so that we may imitate God's generosity in the way we give of ourselves to others, appreciate the generosity given to others without resentment or envy, and accept humbly the generosity of mercy and forgiveness when we do not deserve it. By doing so, we may, as Saint Paul put it, "conduct [ourselves] in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27).

Question of the Week

When have I resented the generosity shown to someone else? When have I failed to realize the generosity shown to me?

Prayer of the Faithful:

We call upon the Lord with our needs and the needs of our sisters and brothers, assured—as we sang in the psalm—that the Lord is near.

- For the Church, that we may welcome all those who seek the Lord at any time in their lives, realizing that in the kingdom of heaven the last will be first, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all those who labor in the vineyards and on the farms of this nation, that they may enjoy the blessings of satisfying work, generous landowners, and bountiful harvests, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For our Jewish brothers and sisters, who celebrate Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, this week, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all those who teach the Catholic faith in schools, religious education and OCIA classes, and other programs, that their own faith may be strengthened as they share it with their students, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all of us gathered here today, that we may challenge ourselves and each other to conduct ourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Generous God, you shower us with your blessings even when we least deserve them. Help us extend your generosity to all those we encounter this week. Hear this and all our needs we present to you, through your Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 176
Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:
The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:
Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:
Graciously raise up, O Lord, those you renew with this Sacrament, that we may come to possess your redemption both in mystery and in the manner of our life.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Concluding Rite:
Final Blessing:
May the Lord bless us, ✠ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: Now Thank We All Our God, #182