

## GOSPEL

*Matthew 20:1-16*

Jesus said to his disciples: "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard. Going out at about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place and said to them, "You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage." So they went. At about the sixth hour and again at about the ninth hour, he went out and did the same. Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing round, and he said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?" "Because no one has hired us" they answered. He said to them, "You go into my vineyard too." In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first." So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each. When the first came, they expected to get more, but they too received one denarius each. They took it, but grumbled at the landowner. "The men who came last" they said "have done only one hour, and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day's work in all the heat." He answered one of them and said, "My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the last-comer as much as I pay you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?" Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.'

## HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS (TRANSLATED FROM ITALIAN, EXCERPT)

*24 September 2017*

This passage of the Gospel, this parable, makes us understand this: God goes out to find us. Five times in this passage we speak of the exit: the exit of God, the master of the house, who goes to fetch the workers for his vineyard. And the day is a person's life, and

God goes out in the morning, mid-morning, noon, afternoon until evening, at five. He doesn't get tired of going out. Our God never tires of going out to look for us, to show us that he loves us. "But, father, I am a sinner ...". And how many times do we stand in the square like these [in the parable] who are there all day long; and being in the square is being in the world, being in sins, being ... "Come!" - "But it's late..." - "Come!". For God it is never late. Never, never! This is the logic of his conversion. He goes out of Himself to seek us, and so much has He left Himself that He sent His Son to look for us. Our God always has his gaze on us. (Lk 15:20). But why did she see him? Because every day, and perhaps several times a day, she went up to the terrace to see if her son came, if the son came back. This is the heart of our God: he is always waiting for us. And when someone says: "I have found God", he is wrong. In the end, he found you and took you with him. It is He who takes the first step. He never tires of going out, going out ... He respects the freedom of every man but he is there, waiting for us to open the door for him a little.

And this is the great thing about the Lord: he is humble. Our God is humble. He humbles himself by expecting us. He is always there, waiting.

We are all sinners and we all need an encounter with the Lord; of an encounter that gives us strength to move forward, to be better, simply. But let's be careful. Because He passes, He comes and it would be sad that He passes and we do not notice that He is passing. And today we ask for grace: "Lord, may I be sure that You are waiting. Yes, waiting for me, with my sins, with my defects, with my problems ". We all have them, all of them. But He is there: He is there, always. I believe the worst of sins is not understanding that He is always there waiting for me, not having faith in this love: distrust in God's love.

May the Lord grant you this grace on this joyful day for you. Me too, everyone. The grace of being sure that He is always at the door, waiting for me to open a little bit to enter. And do not be afraid: when the prodigal son met his father, the father came down

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from the terrace and went to meet his son. That old man was in a hurry, and the Gospel says that when the son began to speak: "Father, I have sinned ...", he did not let him speak; he embraced him, kissed him (cf. Lk 15: 20-21). This is what awaits us if we open the door a little bit: the embrace of the Father.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



**Head:** How does Jesus invite us to look upon those who struggle to come to faith, perhaps leaving it until 'the last minute'?



**Heart:** How does it make you feel to know that God is continually 'going out' to search for you and invite you 'into his vineyard'?



**Hands:** In what ways could you 'go out to others', assisting them to meet Jesus who is searching for them?

## PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the 'Glory Be'.