

Readings:

First: Isaiah 55:6-9

Second: Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16a

Theme: GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS

My dear brothers and sisters, I welcome you all with joy to this Eucharistic Celebration.

Today the Liturgy reminds us of a simple but deep truth: **God's ways are not our ways.** Prophet Isaiah says it clearly in the first reading. We human beings make plans, but God is the one who fulfills them in His own time and in His own way.

When I was in my first high school year, 2006, in the minor seminary, I developed a strong desire to go to France. I loved the idea so much that I studied French for four years. I grasped it. I could speak French.

But up to today, I have never gone to France. Instead, God brought me here to America. My plan was France, God's plan was America. And I am happy in America.

In our life, We plan one road, God opens another. And His road is always better. God's ways are not our ways. God's ways are the best.

THE GOSPEL - THE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

In today's Gospel (Matthew 20:1-16), Jesus tells us a parable with the same message.

A householder goes out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agrees with them: one denarius a day. Good.

Later he goes out again:

- At the third hour (9am)
- At the sixth hour (midday)
- At the ninth hour (3pm)
- And even at the eleventh hour (5pm) - almost closing time.

He tells all of them: "Go to my vineyard."

In the evening, when it is time to pay, he pays everyone the same: ONE DENARIUS.

If we were among those who worked from morning, how would we feel? Of course many of us would complain! "Why give the same to those who worked only one hour?" That is our human way of thinking. We calculate, we compare, we complain.

WHAT DOES THE PARABLE MEAN FOR US TODAY?

Let me interpret it quickly for you:

a) **The Householder is God.** He is generous, not calculating. His love does not depend on hours.

b) **The Vineyard is His Church - is our own heart.** God calls us to work there.

c) **The Work is Conversion** - becoming a good person, a good Christian.

Some of us converted early - baptized as babies. Some converted late - maybe last year, maybe today. We have different stories, different generations, but the same call: to be good.

I highly encourage you, my dear friends: aim at being a good person, a good Christian. And pass that same message to your children - they are the future Church in your families.

d) **The Denarius is Heaven.**

The reward God gives at the end of our earthly life. And the reward is one and the same for everyone who remains faithful: the Glory of Heaven. In Heaven, there is no complaining, "I came first." We will all rejoice together.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us not waste time comparing ourselves with others - who prayed more, who came to Church first, who converted last.

Let us instead use our time well: to live as good persons and good Christians, wherever God has placed us.

If we do that, we will all, by God's grace, achieve the same beautiful reward - the Glory of Heaven.

May Mother Mary and St. Bavo continue praying for us.