

Reflecting
on the 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Archdiocese of
Liverpool

Prepare to be attentive to *The God Who Speaks in this story.*



- Light a candle or tea light if possible.
- Perhaps place a flower from the garden or a plant next to the light.

Let us begin our time of prayer for the Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Breathe deeply and allow yourself to become still.

Let the music help you to relax. Ask for God's grace and light to fill your heart and your mind as you open to the Word.



Bless the Lord, my soul
And bless God's holy name
Bless the Lord, my soul
Who leads me into life.



Spend some time just looking at the three images.

- Where is your eye drawn to?
- What feelings are you experiencing?
- What are you noticing?



Pray the Responsorial Psalm for today.



The Lord is close to all who call him.

I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever.
The Lord is great, highly to be praised,
his greatness cannot be measured.

The Lord is close to all who call him.

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures.

The Lord is close to all who call him.

The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
who call on him from their hearts.

The Lord is close to all who call him.

**Now, either read slowly to yourself this story
from the Gospel according to Matthew or better
still, read it aloud, again slowly.**

From the Gospel according to Matthew 20:1-16a



Jesus said, 'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; and he

said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So, they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first."

When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?" So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Spend a few moments allowing some aspect of the Gospel – a word/phrase or image – to touch you more deeply and read this part a second time, aloud if possible.

The reflection on the Gospel is provided by Ged Edwards who is CAFOD's Community Participation Officer working in Liverpool.



We are now in Creation Time, a special time in September and October started by Pope Francis for us to reflect on the beauty of Creation and the damage that humankind is doing to the Earth, and to help us do something about it. Right now, the Earth and everything on it is in real trouble because people and industry all over the world have been burning and releasing into the atmosphere the coal, gas and oil which had been trapped in the earth millions of years ago. This is causing climate change. Pope Francis was so concerned about this that he wrote a letter to everyone in 2015 called *Laudato Si': On Care of our Common Home*, and his concern hasn't lessened since. The urgent thing is that we now have less than ten years to change the way mankind functions on the Earth and get on top of this. Pope Francis says climate change is a symptom of how we are mistreating creation, threatening many species of wildlife and people in poverty across the world.

What is this Gospel story saying to us?

Some years ago, this story was at the heart of our monthly prayers at CAFOD. The vineyard owner gives each of the workers a denarius for their work. In Jesus' time, a denarius was like the National Minimum Wage today - the vineyard owner was ensuring that those who worked for him and their families had enough to live on that day, as well as ensuring that his grapes were picked, and the vineyard looked after. As we reflected, we asked a question: if people got the same pay whether they worked all day or just for one hour, who would turn up to look after the vineyard early the following morning or would they all leave it till there

was just an hour of daylight left? That is not the point Jesus is making in the parable, but it is something his audience would be considering, and so should we.

I live near Prescot and people still talk about the BICC factory ("The BI") which employed thousands of people making electrical cables in the factory, and thousands more in supporting jobs. The BI was run down and closed in 1991, people moved away and 30 years later, Prescot has not fully recovered. An out of town retail park has replaced some of it but the town centre has many underused and boarded up shops.

In the Gospel story, it's not just the local community or the owner that needs the vineyard. They both need it – it's their common home, all the year round. They are both bound to it. It is part of their lives and it keeps them all alive, and so it is the responsibility of all of them to care for it. Like for many in Prescot, the BI was the backdrop for every moment of their lives, their successes, failures, from cradle to grave, bringing them together and sustaining their lives and their family and community, body and soul. People depend on an employer and an employer depends on its people. But it's the *place* that brings them together.

The BI was part of the Common Good. That is even more the case with the Earth as a whole, a bigger scale, but the impacts of climate change are felt everywhere, and we all play a part in it. For now, as the summer days get shorter, can we think about playing our part in preserving the Common Good? Let's keep the oil, gas and coal in the ground! Let's reach for a jumper, rather than the boiler switch, and walk rather than get in the car if we can. Small steps will make a difference if we all take them. Try and spend five minutes looking at and listening to nature. And please write to express your

concern to [your MP](#). It's their job to represent us and we need to tell them this is important to us.

You could request they ask that the Government:

- invests overseas in renewable energy, not in energy from oil, coal and gas,
- ensures by 2030 that new cars sold are electric rather than petrol or diesel,
- reduces speeds around schools to 20mph to encourage walking and cycling

Pope Francis has released a [video](#) for Creation Time in which he says, "Today, not tomorrow; today, we have to take care of Creation responsibly. Let us pray that the planet's resources will not be plundered but shared in a just and respectful manner. No - to plundering; yes - to sharing."

So, this Creation Time, let's join him in celebrating and protecting our Common Home.

Take a few moments to receive and reflect on this prayer poem by Rosemary Power.



God grace us to turn from selfish hoarding
As the rich farmer learnt that the food offered to the
poor
Nourished his own soul.

Grant that we share your resources, our concern,
Our time and lamentation,
That all may grieve and give and grow together.

Whether we are home alone,
Weary with giving, exhausted with serving,
Isolated in grief,
We are God's guests on earth,
And God keeps a generous table.

As a result of your reflection, offer some prayers of intercession for the people and situations in our world today that seem to you to be most in need.

Let's begin with the prayer Archbishop Malcolm has asked us to pray at this time and then you may like to include one or more of prayers that follow and/or add your own:



God Our Father,
each person is precious to You.
You are the Giver of life.
Have mercy on us and protect us at this time,
as the coronavirus threatens health and life.
You are an ever-present Helper in time of trouble.
Watch over those who are suffering,
give strength to those who are aiding the sick
and give courage to all in this time of anxiety.
We ask this of you in the name of your Son.
Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The following three prayers are from Pope Francis's Encyclical [*Laudato Si': Care for our Common Home*](#).

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognise that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day, encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

O God of the poor help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

We pray for all those who are close to death and those who have recently died ... may they know the eternal love of God.

We pray now in the words Jesus 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.

To end your time of reflection, listen to *Let us sing as we go.*



As we go in jubilation let us sing a song of love
Let it sound in every nation deep blue sea to skies
above
As we go amidst creation let it be with tenderness
May we show great dedication to collective
selflessness
*This is our common home
Let us care for our common home
And with joy let us sing as we go*

Let us put behind transgressions changing our
collective heart
Let us love the earth with passion so we have a
brand-new start
God's caress lives in each creature so in all activity
Seeking harmony with nature is our common destiny
This is our common home
Let us care for our common home
And with joy let us sing as we go

God our Father has entrusted nature to humanity
Let us act with peace and justice and responsibility
May we live in humble union seeking peace and
charity
Christ our centre and communion shows us all the way
to be
This is our common home
Let us care for our common home
And with joy let us sing as we go

Acknowledgements

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