

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Seek the Lord. Is 55:6-9
Life to me is Christ. Phil 1:20-24,27
'You go into the vineyard too.' Mt 20:1-16

Next week:

A challenge to religious people.
Ezek 18:25-28; Phil 2:1-11; Mt
21:28-32.

In a nutshell

At first glance, today's Gospel seems to be a shocking promotion of unfair labour practices. In its layers of meaning, however, we find a challenging message about 'letting God be God'. We should rejoice in the abundance of God's mercy and gifts rather than demanding that they conform to our limited view of fairness and reward.



'It just didn't seem fair.'

For years I had been urging my parish to be more involved in social justice issues. It had been my theme-song for as long as I could remember. I had pretty much given up on anyone taking any notice, but I continued to suggest, encourage, and pass on educative information about various justice issues at parish meetings.

Then one day, out of the blue, one of the parish council members came up with an idea about supporting an international project for clearing landmines in villages at risk. Parishioners embraced the idea with enthusiasm. Plans went into action. At last! Social justice was finally on the parish agenda.

I should have been happy. I should have felt victorious about this new development. But to my shame, I felt peeved, resentful. It just didn't seem fair. I had been faithfully voicing the importance of having a parish social justice project for years. Then someone else comes along with a bright idea, and, without even a nod in my

direction, gets the place humming!

On a number of occasions I had to bite my tongue as I listened to people wax on about the importance of the project. 'Well, it's about time,' I felt like retorting. 'I've been suggesting we do something like this for years!' Thankfully I stayed quiet. At least I had the sense to realise that I had to take charge of my negative emotions, not inflict them on others.

I took my thoughts and feelings to prayer. I shared my heart with Jesus and I confided in a close friend. I had thought my motives had been pure, but now I came to see that my ego was more involved than I'd care to admit. I had wanted good things to happen, but I had wanted them to happen my way. God was teaching me to be more selfless and trusting, to let God do things God's way. And to rejoice in that. (Ali)

Father, may I allow myself to be loved in the way you want to love me.

From a conversation with a faithful man

'How are you?' I asked my friend, a man with heavy responsibilities both workwise and personally. 'I'm going okay!' he responded with his usual warmth. 'A lot of my plans have been shot to pieces by one thing or another, but we battle on! I'm just praying that I will understand what God's trying to teach me through it all.'



church below the rooftops

Faithfulness

I have been a faithful Catholic and Mass-goer all my life. I'm very happy to be so! But it hasn't been without cost or struggle. I remember one Easter when there was a moment when I felt a little envious of the joyous celebration the parish held for the people who were being baptised for the first time. I thought to myself: 'No one has ever celebrated my faith commitment like that - and I've been at it for forty-plus years!' That moment of envy was short-lived, but it did awaken me to the importance of appreciating people for their fidelity. (RC)

Think . Talk

Think of a time you when found it difficult to rejoice in another's happiness and good fortune. What emotions did you wrestle with? How did you handle them? What light does today's Gospel shed on this experience?



RealPeople offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.

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