

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (Mt 20:1-16a): 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... 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?...'"

Speculation

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(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, the explanation of the Lord —that touches the subject matter of work— discovers a highly topical issue: in the picture an outbreak of tension materializes, just the outcome of the speculative reckoning of some laborers. Rather than complaining and grumbling at the householder, those hired in the first hour should have been pleased because some other "co-citizens" could also work.

Individual rights, when detached from a framework of duties which grants them their full meaning, can run wild, leading to an escalation of demands which is effectively unlimited and indiscriminate. The current tendencies towards a short-term economy —sometimes very short-term— consequence of selfish speculation are morally unacceptable and need to be carefully evaluated. This requires further and deeper reflection on the meaning of economy and its goals, in addition to a profound adjustment with a broadminded criterion of the model to be developed.

—O Jesus, my Redeemer, you have come to save me because you have not thought of your rights but of my needs: your love —which spreads out "for free"— did not bear in mind the cost of my liberation.