



PARISH OF ST. AGATHA
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Jesus I Trust in You

POPE FRANCIS: CALLING EVERYONE, CALLING ALWAYS

Jesus tells of a landowner who “goes out and calls” people to work in his vineyard. “That owner,” said Pope Francis, “represents God, who calls *everyone* and calls *always*.” This is how God acts even today, and we, in turn, are called to imitate this attitude by going out to seek people wherever they may be. “This means being open to horizons that offer hope to those stationed on the existential peripheries,” the Pope said, people “who have not yet experienced, or who have lost, the strength and light that comes with meeting Christ.” He added, “The Church must always be like God, always going out. And when the Church is not going out, she gets sick.” Pope Francis said it is better for the Church to be “going out” announcing the Gospel, despite the dangers, than to grow sick by remaining closed in on herself. “God always goes out, because He’s a Father Who loves – and the Church always needs to do the same thing, always going out.”

GOING BEYOND JUSTICE

The second attitude of the landowner also mirrors the action of God. When he pays the workers their wages, the owner gives all of them the same pay, no matter how long they worked. From this we understand “that Jesus is not speaking about work and just wages, but about the Kingdom of God and the goodness of the heavenly Father,” said Pope Francis. God “does not look at the time and the results,” the Pope continued. Instead, He considers “the availability and the generosity with which we put ourselves at His service.” This way of acting, said Pope Francis, “is *more than just*, in the sense that it goes beyond justice and is manifested in *Grace*.” Those who rely on their own merits “find themselves last,” the Pope explained, while “those who humbly entrust themselves to the Father’s mercy, from being last, find themselves first.”

THE FIELD AND THE VINEYARD

Pope Francis concluded his Angelus address with the prayer that “Mary Most Holy might help us to feel every day the joy and wonder of being called by God to work for Him, in His field which is the world, and His vineyard which is the Church.” And he prayed that we might “have as our only recompense [God’s] love, Jesus’s friendship, which is *everything* for us.” (Vatican News).

CHURCH BELLS CALL LOST SHEEP TO RETURN TO THE SHEPHERD

This Homily is written by Fr. Marius O’Reilly, editor of Totus Tuus magazine). A few years ago I visited Auschwitz. It was an experience I will never forget. I had known a bit about the Gas Chambers from films and books, and how women and children on arrival were immediately sent to the chambers. I had known little about the labour camp element, and how starving men were worked to death in the most brutal of conditions. The average man lasted about a month. I tried to imagine how I would fair in those conditions. Would I keep the faith? Would I reach out to those weaker than me? Would I pray for the guards? In times since when I have felt the burden of the cross, I have often thought back to my visit and been inspired to keep going, because my burden was nothing compared to those poor people.

The man in charge of Auschwitz was a man called Rudolf Hoess. He and his family lived in a beautiful villa not far from the Gas Chambers, where 1-2 million people were murdered. The house was so close that the strawberries that were picked in their garden had to be washed thoroughly to remove the ashes. You could not begin to imagine the darkness within this man. After the war, he was caught and sentenced to be hanged in Auschwitz. He was kept in isolation for a short period of time.

It was there in silence that he heard church bells ringing each morning, and it reminded him of when he was an altar boy at nine years of age. The kindness of the Polish guards towards him also made him think, and after some time he requested a Priest. He had his confession heard and then the next day before he was hanged, he received Holy Communion on his knees. Everyone present wept at what they saw.

People have said that they thought this was unfair given what this man had done. In our Gospel today the workers who were labouring from maybe 6am received the same wage as those who started work around 4pm, and only did an hour's work. But those same workers we are told were around all day waiting to be hired. Their one hour's work isn't the full story. Had they been hired they gladly would have worked from 6am too.

In a similar way we don't know the full story with anyone. We look at the actions and make a judgement but we don't know what a person's childhood was like, and what they were subjected to for instance. Only God sees the full picture. Today's First Reading reminds us that our thoughts are not God's thoughts, our ways are not His ways. We are very limited, and see everything subjectively....with limited intelligence. One day please God we will get to Heaven, and we will be surprised by who is there....and who is not there. There will also be people there who will thank us for our prayers and sacrifices which helped them as the prayers of people like St Maximilian Kolbe in Auschwitz no doubt helped Rudolf Hoess. In the meantime, let us rejoice in God's unfathomable mercy and pray and offer sacrifice for poor sinners. These are the ones Jesus came to save. God bless, Fr. Marius.

DIVINE MERCY IS UNLIMITED

I thought the above homily was worth sharing. Jesus opens the floodgates of His boundless Grace and Mercy for everyone who asks. This parable also amplifies the merciful scene on Calvary (Lk 23:42), when the Penitent Thief turned to Jesus and repented. In a humble tone, he acknowledged his sinfulness (guilt) and in his last breath, asked Jesus to show him Divine Mercy by allowing him to join the Saints in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus obliged, forgave him and hired. Like the landowner, He paid him a full divine wages of Peace and Joy, to spend in the Vineyard of Eternal Life. Jesus’ Divine Mercy is boundless and unlimited. Extraordinarily, the life of service for the Good Thief and the Nazi soldier were just limited to a moment of repentance and a sincere Confession of Faith in Christ. They both received the same wages in line with all the great Saints *hired* before them, which is Eternal Life. Only a repentant and humble soul can enter Heaven. The ultimate divine wage can be achieved, by us all equally, provided we profess our faith meaningfully in Christ. The next time one prays the Creed, ponder on the words and know that it is a Profession (admitting a line of employment under God’s Will) and Confession (admitting our guilt) of humble Faith in God. God bless, Fr. Brendan