

September 20, 2026 Homily
Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/092026.cfm>

Today's Gospel contains a beautiful teaching about God's extravagant and limitless mercy. The vineyard owner spends his day hiring workers. Early in the morning, he begins seeking, finding, calling and hiring workers, and he ends right before sunset. He doesn't even control or supervise what the workers do in his vineyard. He only rests until every last worker is brought in. When the day is over, all workers receive the same just payment. This landowner acts with irrational and generous mercy. The workers who were chosen first, early in the morning, feel superior to the ones hired at sunset. They have worked all day long. In terms of what we consider justice; they will get better payment. Once all workers receive the same amount of money, the first chosen feel envious. Their need for superiority is undermined.

This parable teaches us how God's economy works. People are welcome into God's vineyard not by merit, but by mercy. The last workers hired are not rewarded for late arrival, they are welcome into a Kingdom where grace is given not by earning it, but by God's limitless mercy and love. In God's vineyard, no one is paid what they are worth. The workers are paid what they need. "Grace comes not in response to what we do, but in spite of it." (Beverly Gaventas, Sought and Saved, Ministry Matters, Sept, 2026). By telling us that the landowner is not in his office, waiting for the workers to come, but outside, looking for workers, recruiting, inviting, until everyone is welcome into his vineyard, the story teaches us that God is not in heaven or in a Church, waiting for sinners to arrive: He is on the roads, looking, calling, hiring. God spends his time seeking the lost to save them. Also this story teaches us that we don't find God in our lives: God finds us and calls us. God's Kingdom is radically different from our kingdoms.

Dear brothers and sisters, the landowner in the story is not only interested in gathering grapes, he seems to be more interested in gathering people. He seems determined to make sure everyone in the town gets a job. It is not just about grapes. It is about grace. Jesus imagines a community not organized around fairness, but around mercy. This is not about justice as we attempt to administer it in our kingdoms. This is about loving grace, the grace that dwells in and rules from the depths of God's Heart. And the story continues surprising us. We are not here today because we found God. We are here,

because God has found us and He wants us to work for his vineyard. God has a job to do in this world broken by sin and suffering, and He wants to do it with you and with me. God is just dying to employ us and others, in His harvest. You and I have been sought, found, rescued, and saved. From this parable, we can conclude that Jesus did not die just for the Church: He died for us and for all those who don't know that God is busy searching and seeking them. God doesn't just love Jesus' followers: "God so loved the world..." including the world that has not yet met God in Christ Jesus.

So, the message is filled with hope. Our relationship to Christ does not depend on our own efforts only: It is God's self-assignment. Salvation is not something we achieve by our own merits and efforts. It is God's self-assignment. We can be the pious Catholics who have been members of this great community for our entire lives. The same salvation offered to us here will be offered to those who do not yet believe, if they allow God to find them and hire them for his Kingdom. And the message reminds us of another truth: "The first will be last, and the last will be first."

Our main task as disciples, is to allow God finds us wherever we are. If we reflect on our personal journey of faith, we will be able to see that we are here today, professing this beautiful faith, trusting Jesus, because in some way or another, Jesus searched for and saved us. God came out of his Kingdom and found us, hired us, invited us into a Kingdom to which we cannot invite ourselves. And He will continue looking, inviting, hiring, until the end of times. All of this is good news for us. The message for us is clear: We are all hired to perform a specific mission. The harvest is ready, we are the workers, we have been hired and our mission is to get involved before the sunset of our lives comes.

Do we imitate God's limitless mercy in our daily actions? Does God's limitless mercy lead my political, economic and social responsibilities?

The Universal Prayer
Sunday, September 20th 2026
Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers, the generosity of God, demonstrated in the teachings and actions of Jesus, calls on us to be generous in our prayer, words and actions, showing a constant witness to charity, justice and mercy.

1. For Pope Leo preparing for his Apostolic Visit to Paris and Lourdes at the end of the week, that he will be a witness to peace in the world and unity in the Church.

We pray to the Lord.

2. For each other and all who carry the name of Christian that we, who receive everything from God, will show generosity to others, especially to the poor, the lonely and the apprehensive.

We pray to the Lord.

3. For the quality, supply and distribution of water in all lands, that in this month's Season of Creation, we will remember all who do not have access to this necessity for life.

We pray to the Lord.

4. For all countries in the Middle East burdened with war and violence, remembering particularly Palestine and Lebanon, that political, religious and cultural differences may not be excuses to stive for peace.

We pray to the Lord.

5. For the peoples of Ukraine and Russia along with Nigeria, Sudan, Myanmar, and Haiti, that the constant prayers of people of many faiths who seek the Lord, will move hate-filled hearts to seek healing reconciliation in God.

We pray to the Lord.

6. For a great increase in the number of vocations to religious life and to the priesthood, in the religious order of Daughters of St. Mary of Guadalupe and for the Diocese of Raleigh.

We pray to the Lord.

7. For those who have died through a lack of water or through war that they will find life in Christ in the endless joy of heaven.

We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

Father, you are kind and full of compassion, abounding in love. Look upon our world and our Church and save us from present dangers.

Through Christ our Lord.