

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Everything Is Grace Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday, August 20, 2014
8:15 AM Ez 34:1-11; **Mt 20:1-6** St. Bernard, abbot, doctor (The kingdom of God is really a matter of God's generosity aimed at everyone.)

This parable has many different aspects to it, but the second one is an issue of: **What really depends on us?** This is a parable about the kingdom, and **whereas we are all called on to participate with God in building the kingdom, it doesn't depend on us at all.** And if somehow we think it does or we think it only comes about because we withstand so many hours in the sun, we are kidding ourselves. It's not like that. In fact, we may be doing ourselves a great deal of harm by thinking wrongly about all these things.

The kingdom of God is really a matter of God's generosity. God's generosity is really **aimed at everyone**, even people who only hear about it at the end of their lives, here the end of the day. **This is the mercy of God.** This is what Sister Faustina was always talking about: the mercy of God. **The divine mercy is pouring itself out.** It's way beyond what anyone is owed. **No one is owed this at all.** That's the whole point. That's why we use the word "grace." **Everything is grace.** Nothing is really a true payment for anything. **Yes, God does ask us to do certain things, but the kingdom is not our payment** because we cooperate a little bit, because we make a little contribution, because we suffer a little bit for a day.

After all, **these workmen are only working for a day.** It's a daily wage. It's a day's work. It's all short-term, the effort I mean. But the **results are long-term.** And they are all **rooted in the wonder of God's mercy and goodness and graciousness and generosity.** And the catch is that **we have a way of saying we are not worth it**—we are not worth it, because that's really what these laborers who were in the vineyard all day long are saying about themselves because, although in this story they are in the vineyard all day long, in fact they haven't been with God from the beginning, not at all. **Everybody is really coming in at the end**, all real people. **So those who think that they are the great contributors are kidding themselves and declaring themselves unworthy of the graciousness and generosity of God**, not realizing that's what they are saying. But that's the nature of a parable. It's trying to get people to see things ordinarily we don't and to **understand ourselves in a new way.**