

The Congregation of Saint Athanasius  
A sermon preached by Father Bradford on The 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity  
September 20, 2020

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C.S. Lewis reminded us in a book called *The Great Divorce* that not everyone will like it in God's place. Last week and again today in the Mass Gospel Our Lord Jesus gives us parables about this very condition. The common theme of both parables is that people misunderstand the master.

Last week we were told what happens when a man does not get into the channel of forgiveness: forgiving as he is forgiven. The sign he is disconnected is when he sees no relationship between the mercy he receives from his superior and the mercy he refuses to give to his subordinate. (People who do not see the linkage between legal abortion and the increasing violence in society suffer a similar disconnection.)

In today's Gospel the laborers also misunderstand the master. They think he is a plain businessman who is only interested in getting the job done. They are not satisfied with their agreed-upon wages when the landowner gave an equal amount to those who only worked at the end of the day. Rather than praise the master's generosity, their happiness was contingent upon someone else not being able to feed his kids! And so in both parables the master returned the relationship to one they understand. Last week mercy was rescinded and the servant sent to debtor's prison. This week the final statement is: "You agreed for a penny, take it and go."

As you may surmise, the good Lord was not giving a crash course in fair labor laws! The whole point of parables is to bring us a realization of supernatural things. This is how things work in God's place. And some people do not like that. They either do not know or do not like the fact Almighty God does not need us to do anything! His motive for involving us in His work is for *our* good, not His. He isn't worried the sun is setting and the work might not be finished! After all, He could tell the sun to stop in its course, as He once famously did at Gibeon. Almighty God hires souls in order to bring *them* under His protection. *Serving the Lord opens us to grace*. That is the whole point! His grace makes possible our cultivation of the virtue of mercy. And mercy leads to generosity. And so to that end, Our Heavenly Father will grab *anyone* who will come. It makes no difference to Him whether this is early or late in the day.

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That, says Our Lord Jesus, is *Divine generosity*. And if some people misunderstand what God has revealed, perhaps they are headed for a different place.