**WEDNESDAY AUGUST 18 – XX WEEK O.T. [B]**

**'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? (Or) am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?'**

**A landowner needs labourers for his vineyard. He goes out at dawn, he goes where workers would usually gather and hires labourers for his vineyard. We are in the first hours of the day. The work time is very long. Thus is the reign of heaven. A vast vineyard that needs to be laboured. One needs many forces. The landowner goes out, finds them, hires them, sends them to work in his vineyard. There is someone who calls, a called, a vineyard. Work is not free. The landowner agrees a daily wage with everyone he calls and accepts his invitation. Agreed the cost of labour, they are all sent to work in his vineyard. A truth to be immediately highlighted must always remain in the heart. Work is not without pay. To the labourer, the just wage is promised. Based on this justice, one goes to work in the vineyard. The vineyard is great, very great. The labourers called are not enough. The landowner goes out around nine o’clock in the morning, he sees the others standing idle in the marketplace waiting for someone to call them. These labourers, too, are called and sent to work in the vineyard. With these ones, the wage is not stipulated or agreed. The landowner promises he would have given them what is just. Based on this word, one goes to the vineyard. Received the word of justice or of the right wage, these labourers go to work in the vineyard. The rules of the justice must be indicated earlier, not later. The person can first accept or refuse, he can even arrange the price.**

**Not even these labourers are enough. The landowner goes out again around midday and does likewise around three o’clock in the afternoon. He calls labourers for his vineyard, promising he would have given them what is just. Are the labourers enough for the vineyard of the landowner? Not at all. The work is so much, the vineyard so vast to require a great number of labourers. So, the landowner goes out around five o’clock, as well. He sees labourers standing idle in the marketplace. The landowner is surprised that the labourers could stay idle in the marketplace all day and asks them: 'Why do you stand here idle all day? Is it possible that you do not need to earn a loaf of bread?’ The reaction of the landowner is due to the fact that his vineyard lacks of labourers and they were, instead, standing idle without doing nothing. It is as if the landowner wanted to tell them: why did you not come to me in search of work? Their answer is immediate: 'Because no one has hired us.' They respected the rules. One stands in the marketplace. The landowner comes. He calls. We go. We are not the ones who have to go. It is up to the landowner to come. Sometimes one must break the rules. We do not wait for God to come and give. We are the ones who ask so that the Lord comes and brings every grace. Prayer anticipates the acting of God in us. The landowner accepts their justifications and sends them to work in the vineyard.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 20,1-16**

**"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.' So they went off. (And) he went out again around noon, and around three o'clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o'clock, he found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They answered, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You too go into my 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? (Or) am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?' Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."**

**The day is over. The landowner gives the due, but he inverts the common rules. He orders the foreman to call the labourers and give them the wage. He must, however, start from the last ones and end with the first ones. The landowner wants everyone to see him, besides being moved by the rule of the firmest justice, as also ruled by the law of mercy, of piety, of compassion, of the great charity. One starts by those who had started about five o’clock in the afternoon. They come and receive the wage. The landowner shows them the great generosity of his heart. They worked only one hour and the landowner treats them as if they had given a day. The landowner of justice adds the charity, the alms, the mercy. He takes nothing away to justice. He adds what it lacks. In fact, justice always lacks of charity. This is valid for the labourer, too. The labourer should always add to justice the love, to love the benevolence, to benevolence the great diligence, to the great diligence all his science and art, so that his work is perfect in everything.**

**The first come and they think they would receive more than what had been agreed, as well. But they, too, receive, each of them, the wage. Why does the landowner not add to these ones, as well, his mercy, his piety and compassion? Because also the mercy and the compassion must be ruled by the justice. One lives the mercy toward those who are in need. Who is fine does not need our mercy, compassion, piety. One gives food to the one who does not have food. Giving food to the one who has food, not only is not mercy, it is also most serious injustice to God. Mercy, alms is toward the poor, not toward the rich men. These labourers have a wage and this is enough for the day of today. Tomorrow they will have another wage and it will be enough for the life of tomorrow. For the other labourers the wage was not enough and the landowner added what it lacked. It has to be noted. The landowner added to everyone what was missing to their being fine. He did not do wrong to anyone. He did not lack neither in the justice not in the charity toward anyone. He just added what was missing to the wage.**

**Those of the first hour, however, start murmuring against the landowner. Why do they murmur? Because they understood nothing of the law of justice and charity. One cannot give charity to the one who already has. It would be a serious injustice. Every man must be very careful not to sin of injustice in carrying out the charity. It should be given to the needy. Giving it to who does not need it is depriving who is in need. And this is the great injustice one commits. One accuses the landowner of injustice. Justice is giving to each one what is his. The wage was of these men and they received the wage. The landowner did not commit any injustice toward them. He was perfectly just. When one observes justice, there are no reasons neither of complaint nor of murmuring. Complaint and murmuring make us guilty of judging and condemnation and a man must never commit such sin. The landowner listens to their murmuring and says to one of them: 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?’ When justice is rigorously observed, every murmuring is a sin. No one can pretend, claim what is beyond justice. On the supernatural side, the reign of heaven is given to everyone who believe in Christ Jesus and convert himself, embracing the Gospel. The call can happen at every time of our life. This is the great mercy of the Lord our God. May the Heavenly Mother help us live this mystery in the joy.**