

**TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – A  
SEPTEMBER 24, 2017**

**It's just, it's just not fair! Today's gospel I mean.  
And that's okay with me. Best it's okay with you too!**

**The parable of the vineyard owner and his distressed workers is unique to Matthew's gospel. Scripture scholars suppose that it addresses specific tensions in the *Jews for Jesus* community for which the anonymous author of Matthew's gospel wrote.**

**What's their beef?**

**Perhaps, that nice guys and gals sometimes do finish last.**

**An honest day's work isn't always its own reward.**

**The good go hungry while the bad and the ugly too often get to have their cake and eat it too.**

**It's just, it's just not fair!**

**We Americans have a strong sense of fair-play. That is a good thing. But it is not the only thing. Justice is the ultimate virtue in court. Not in church! *Do unto others as you would have others do unto you* is the Golden Rule. Still it's just a rule, and you know what Jesus had to say about those religious folk who lived simply and solely by the rules!**

***Love another as I have loved you.* Jesus does justice one better.**

**In good old Catholic theology, justice, along with its sisters, fortitude, prudence and temperance, is a Cardinal virtue ... literally a *hinge* on which to hang the enduring and superior theological virtues of faith, hope and love. I said enduring and superior!**

***In the end there are three things that last. Faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love. Justice can, and sometimes must give way to love.***

**What marriage, here or anywhere, can survive if it's based on justice? Only love can cover a multitude of sins! Anybody here who would be here today if their parents had been *just*? Dare I ask for a show of hands?**

***Are you envious because I am good?***

**The final words of the landowner are that parable's and this homily's punch line. Literally, *Is your eye evil because I am good?* As ever with envy, an act of goodness and generosity blinds certain people to their own good fortune. Must we be counted among them?**

**Mercy and goodness challenge us, as they did the workers in the parable to move beyond justice. God's ways are not our ways. The categories by which we separate ourselves from others are reversed in God's eternal eyes. Not to see as God sees is to preclude random acts of kindness, unexpected moments of joy, and denies us the freedom of forgiveness.**

***In the end, there are three things that last. Faith, Hope and Love. The greatest of these is love. Oh, I know, it's just not fair. Just not fair!***