

Homily Helps October 1, 2023
Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Three weeks until Mission Sunday

In today's responsorial from Psalm 25, we hear: "Remember your mercies, O Lord. Your ways, O LORD, make known to me; teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior."

As believers, we look to Jesus as providing the perfect example of how to conduct our lives. Perhaps we have had moments when we think that his example is too lofty to attain. Maybe we think, "a pious and saintly person can imitate the ways of Christ, but I'm neither pious nor saintly."

Jesus does not let us off the hook that easily. In Matthew, chapter 21, today's gospel reading, he recounts a parable where a father asks his sons to "go out and work in the vineyard today." That is the invitation he makes to us each day.

Some days, we may say "yes," but later make excuses as to why we cannot accept the invitation to be kind, generous, and charitable to others. Other days, we try to resist and say "no," but then recognize that, indeed, because of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist we have a commitment to follow Jesus, to make his light known in the world. Finally, we cannot help but bring Jesus' love and mercy to others. We may try to run away from his sight, but we cannot hide.

Saint Paul in writing to the Philippians brings to focus how the followers of Jesus must act. He says: "... complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing. Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others. Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus..."

Though none of us are perfect, Jesus asks that we listen attentively to his word and have malleable hearts and minds ready to let him teach us his ways, so that we can walk in the way of truth.

The way of truth requires that we "humbly regard others as more important than [our]selves, looking out not for [our] own interests, but also for those of others." As Paul exhorts: "Have in you the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus." As we have experienced the mercy of Jesus, let us be generous in showing mercy to others.

During this month of October, the Church draws attention to missions throughout the world. The Church invites us to join our Holy Father Pope Francis in praying for and sharing resources with the young, persecuted, and poor Church in over 1,100 dioceses around the world. Our brothers and sisters in need look to us for prayers and support.

May we say "yes" to assisting them in their needs – and mean what we say.

