

The Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Year A
23/24 September 2017 ~
Our Lady of Victory Parish Community ~
HOMILY

1st Reading:

Isaiah 55:6-9

- "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord." *The Lord's thoughts and ways are far superior than mere human thoughts and ways.*

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 145 - *Sung*

2nd Reading:

Philippians 1:20c-24; 27a

- "Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. . . . Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ."

GOSPEL:

MATTHEW 20:1-16a

- "The kingdom of heaven is like . . . 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."

i. “Feeding a hurt creates a monster, a monster that can destroy us [and certainly, others]. The only way to slay that monster is forgiveness.”

If we want to be free . . . if we want to live . . . heed the Lord’s call . . . “forgive your brother and sister . . . from your heart . . .” Yes, God has been extravagant . . . with us . . . and with others . . . can we afford to be anything less than what God has given to us?”

That pretty much summarizes what the bottom line was from last weekend’s readings . . . in particular, the Gospel. We encountered this “extravagant” God in the person of Jesus and were challenged to take seriously the compassion, mercy and forgiveness He so generously offers to us . . . by offering that to others.

And this weekend . . . once again . . . we have set before us in the readings . . . this “extravagant” . . . frivolous and most generous God . . . whose thoughts, **fortunately**, are not **our** thoughts . . . yours, or mine . . . whose ways are **not** our ways . . . This weekend . . . you . . . me . . . others . . . are given a pattern of living . . . urged by Paul to “conduct ourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ” . . . because we **are** the presence of Christ in the world . . . and need to make that known in and through our lives. Yes, this weekend . . . we have set before us in the readings . . . and in particular, the Gospel . . . a God who simply wants us to

live and thrive . . . **regardless** of when we decide to take God up on the offer . . . **regardless** of when we decide to receive what God offers us . . . since, it has no expiration date . . . and is always available.

But we also have set before us the challenge to face that which prevents us from taking God up on God's offer . . . receiving what it is God wants to fill us with . . .

II. The late, great “Maya Angelou, the famous American playwright and poet, wrote a series of memoirs about growing up in rural Arkansas. Many of those memoirs centered on her grandmother, a very influential person in her life who ran a little store in their hometown. Maya’s grandmother had very little patience with complainers. Whenever one of the town whiners would come into the store to buy anything, she made sure that Maya was called in to witness the event.”

“[Maya recalled being in the store on one occasion when] her grandmother [engaged one of the usual complainers]: “How are things going?” Immediately the [complainer began] to say how terribly hot it was. It was the hottest he could ever remember it to be. He couldn’t stand the sweltering heat. [He went on to lament on] how much plowing he had to do. It seemed that each year there was more, and his equipment was getting older and it was becoming more difficult. Now all the time that he

was rambling on, Maya's grandmother would look at [Maya] to make sure she was paying attention."

"When the [complainer] finally left, [Maya's] grandmother took Maya aside and said to her, "Child, there are people who went to sleep last night, rich and poor, black and white, who will never wake up again. And every one of those dead people would give all that they had for five minutes of this hot weather, for five minutes of this difficult plowing. So, be careful, child, about complaining. If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, then change the way you think about it. But don't be a complainer, because complaining will rob you of life."

"The advice of Maya Angelou's grandmother dovetails with the words of the landowner in today's gospel to those who complain: "Take what belongs to you and go." Live the life you have been given, not the life that you wish you had been given, [nor] the life that, [so often times, we become convinced that] other people have been given. Live **your** life fully . . . [because no matter who we are . . . **GOD HAS GIVEN YOU . . . ME . . . OTHERS . . . THAT LIFE . . .** and it is **UNIQUE** for you . . . for each one of us] . . . [and] complaining will not only **diminish** you . . . [complaining] will not only **lessen** you . . . [but, complaining will result in failing to recognize not only how

God has been generous with **you** . . . but how God is present now . . . no matter the situation or circumstance.]”

“[Yes] . . . [we must **ALL** be careful about complaining because it can, [and does] rob us of life . . . [it can, and does, prevent us from recognizing God present in our lives . . . in this moment . . .]

“[And], If, [along the way] you don’t like something . . . **change it**. If you can’t change it then change the way you think about it. But, don’t waste your time complaining. Life is simply too short for that.”

“The good news is this: life may be unfair, but God is in charge. And God will not forget any of us. If we take the life that we have been given (even if [we are convinced that] others have been given more) and live it, we will find that it is enough. For once we choose to live our own lives, we will discover that we have not been short-changed or cheated. We will realize that everyone of us has been given a full day’s wage . . . [every one of us have been given another opportunity to encounter this extravagant . . . this frivolous . . . this generous God! And live fully . . . the life God has given us . . . the life “**worthy of the Gospel of Christ!**”