

## Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 24, 2017

I wonder if anyone else has that “one” parable that you just can’t accept. When I told my husband that he would have a difficult time reflecting on the parable I was given, he knew exactly which one it was. I will admit that until eight years ago, I too had trouble accepting that the laborers hired last would be paid the same wages as the ones hired first.

My parents were very active in the Methodist church in a small town not too far from here. My dad taught Sunday School, mom was active with the various ladies groups and they were youth leaders for many years. However, when we moved to Springfield and joined a Baptist church, dad suddenly quit going to church. Although only having an eighth grade education, he was the most well read person I have ever known. He had read the Bible more than a few times and was only too happy to debate theology with anyone thinking they had all of the answers. Dad began to identify as a Deist and this was totally unacceptable to an all-knowing, never doubting her faith, teenage daughter. Tears, arguments, pleading did not sway my dad.

Years passed and I married a life-long Catholic, and converted to Catholicism. Being very passionate about my Faith, I felt it was my responsibility to convince Dad that he had to admit that he DID believe that Jesus had died for us and rose from the dead so we could have life after death. There was no persuading this very stubborn man.

Dad at the age of 92, was admitted into St. John’s on March 3, 2008 and was informed the next day that he had two weeks to live. His heart was not functioning anymore and there was no treatment. He was taken up to Hospice on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor, which I found ironic not only because it had been the maternity floor, but his room was the room I was in when I delivered our second son seventeen years before. Dad took to Hospice as though it was a terrific Penthouse with wonderful views of the city. Two weeks came and went and Dad was still hanging on. At this point, we decided a family member should be with him at all times. Mom spent the days with Dad and my sister and I took turns spending the nights.

The third week of March that year was Holy Week and my night was Holy Thursday. Mom said she would stay with Dad until I came back from church. When I returned to the hospital, my brother-in-law was waiting to take Mom home and they both said that Dad had been very quiet and asleep, so I should have a peaceful night. As soon as they were out the door, Dad’s eyes flew open and he grabbed my hand. He said, “I’ve been waiting for you, kid. I wasn’t asleep, but I wasn’t here. Jesus was here and he took me to the place I’m going. It’s not quite ready, but it’s more beautiful that I can describe. And, I wanted to tell you kid that you were right. You’ve been right all along.” For the next eight days, he would just smile at the crucifix on the wall and mouth the words, thank you!

So, for me, this parable is comforting because no matter the length of time we labor to know and love God, the times we may take a break or a vacation from our faith, if we recommit ourselves to God, even if it’s the last eight days of our life, we have the same opportunity of spending eternity with God as those who never took a detour.

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