



The Parish of the Assumption
West Oxfordshire
Holy Trinity Chipping Norton
St Teresa's Charlbury

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The Assumption is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham Trust

Sunday 20th September 2026 – Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: Year A

Mt. 20:1-16

Dear Friends,

Last week's Gospel was overshadowed a little by the Pastoral letter from His Grace the Archbishop, with its focus on Catholic education and an appeal for more Governors or Directors for our schools, colleges and academies. Thank you to those who have stepped forward to offer their time and service. The Gospel for the Sunday was about the Mercy of God, that favourite theme of Pope Francis. The servant who was released from an enormous debt by his Master does not show the same compassion towards a fellow-servant who owes considerably less, and he receives his due punishment. The message is clear: as we forgive so we will be forgiven. It is so easy to harbour resentments and grudges which harm us more than the other person!

This week's Gospel parable is also about the Mercy of God but this time the emphasis is on God's action rather than ours. The Master of the house, the owner of the vineyard, is hiring labourers to bring in the crop. It is a phenomenon in Palestine that sudden Autumnal storms can cause havoc to the vines and perhaps this is the background to today's parable. At 6am the first men are selected, no doubt the fittest and strongest looking. But then the owner returns at 9am, noon, 3 pm and even 5pm, an hour before the end of the day's work. The storm clouds may be gathering and he is anxious to harvest his grapes before they are ruined. So everyone is called to assist, even those left behind as too old, too young or just not up to the job.

So far so good. The issue begins at pay-time. A denarius was the standard daily wage and when the early workers saw the latecomers receiving this they must have convinced themselves that their reward would be substantially higher. What a shock to be paid the same for 12 hours work as for one hour... and understandably, they are "put out" and grumble at the Master. He reminds them that they agreed on a denarius and a denarius they are receiving. Probably our reaction would be like those who complained about the unfairness of the situation. How would we feel if Jack pitched up at noon, or Jill at 3pm, and we realised they were paid the same as we who had turned to at 9am!

Of course, this story is a parable about the kingdom of heaven, not a comment on work practices. Jesus is saying that it makes no difference in terms of God's Mercy how long people have heard His message. The Hebrews were like the first labourers but as the Gospel spread out from the people of Israel to the Gentile nations so more and more have entered the kingdom, and it is still continuing. Being "first" does not mean more favourable treatment. The Sacrifice of Christ broke down the wall, as St Paul writes, and those who come late to the vineyard are no worse off than those who arrived at the beginning. The thief on the Cross was promised Paradise at the end of his life because he turned to the Lord and that is the vital action.

P.S. This week Masses and Rosary as usual. Two feasts: St Matthew on Monday and Our Lady of Walsingham on Thursday. Padre Pio on Wednesday too! Mid-week Masses are times of reflection and it is heartening to see numbers strong particularly on a Tuesday and Thursday. Just a reminder: Confession is available every day either before or after Mass, at 5.30pm on a Saturday or by appointment. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a wonderful opportunity to experience God's loving Mercy. Burdens carried can be jettisoned, guilt can be assuaged. It is rightly called a *Sacrament of Healing*.

God bless, Fr Clive

Second Collection is for Catholic Evangelisation.

Masses & Rosary:

	Holy Trinity	St Teresa's
Monday	9.15 Mass <i>St Matthew</i>	
Tuesday	9.15 Mass <i>St Carlo's Coffee Club</i>	
Wednesday		9.15am Mass <i>Adoration & Benediction</i> <i>St Pio of Pietrelcina</i>
Thursday	9.15am Mass <i>Adoration & Benediction</i> <i>Our Lady of Walsingham</i>	
Friday	9.15am Rosary for Peace	9.15am Mass
Saturday	6pm Vigil Mass	
Sunday	11am Mass	9.15am Mass

Hosting Fr Tony: if you are interested in hosting Fr Tony, a new list can be found at the back of church should you want to put your name forward.

Friday October 9th sees the return of our very popular Wine Tasting Evening, hosted with the kind permission of James and Juliet Byrne at their house in New Street, Chipping Norton. It follows the usual format, you are asked to bring food to share, and some cash for raffle tickets! If anyone has any items suitable for the raffle, we would be very grateful. Tickets are on sale at £25 each, all proceeds will go to Father Peter's Columbian charity, *Let the Children Live*, tickets are for sale in both Churches and we hope it will be an opportunity to better get to know each other. Grateful thanks go to Daniel once again and to Kathy, and to all you lovely people who by buying tickets go some way to help the street Children of Columbia.

Notice to HT helpers: Holy Trinity has been open for prayer on weekdays for a couple of months now, it's proving very popular with a steady stream of visitors. The front door is unlocked, the wall lights are on, but the screen doors remain locked, Ruth Hulme unlocks at 8am and locks up at 6pm (locking up earlier in the winter). Helpers, please do not relock the church between those daily hours, the church should be open daily for visitors and parishioners to pray.

Please continue to pray for our sick, housebound and frail parishioners of our Parish, in particular Hilda and Anne Clifton of St Teresa's.

The parish pilgrimage to Winchester arranged by Suze Mathews has come and gone to great acclaim – a moving and thought-provoking spiritual experience coupled with insightful descriptions of the lives and times of our Saxon kings and saintly predecessors. We travelled in and around Winchester itself, to the abbey at Malmesbury where St Aldheim presided as Abbott, and the beautiful little church of St Laurence at Bradford on Avon. Fr Aldo was with us every pilgrim step of the way for Benediction and daily Mass, offering spiritual support with a welcome sprinkling of humility and devotion which hopefully will remain as a lasting memory of this opportunity to come together as two churches but one parish. Our grateful thanks to Suze for all her professionalism and sheer hard work in putting the pilgrimage together flawlessly, and to all the new friends we made from ACN and beyond our immediate parish who helped swell the numbers.

