**25th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME [21th September, 2014]**

READINGS: Isaiah 55:6-9 / Philippians 1:20, 27 / Matthew 20:1-16

THEME: ONE REWARD – HEAVEN

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

Most of the public buses in Ghana don’t depart from the stations according to fixed schedules. Rather, they depart anytime they are filled to capacity. However, a passenger can’t say that because he/she boarded the bus first and wasted more time waiting for it to be filled to capacity, he/she should be given a discount in the fare. In other words, the first person to board the bus pays the same amount (for the same destination) as the last person to board it. Similarly, by the parable in today’s gospel reading (Matthew 20), Jesus is saying that since we are going to the **same destination** (**Heaven)**, whether we became Christians before others or not, the **reward is the same**: entrance into Heaven.

Often at a public bus station in Ghana, one finds a “bookman”. He has the duty of encouraging people to board the buses. Often, he is heard calling out aloud “one man, one man …” as a way of announcing that the loading bus is yet to be filled to capacity. Similarly, God wants all men and women to be saved, and so every day, through the lives, actions and preaching of Christians, His Spirit is saying to those yet to board the Heaven-bound bus: “one man, one man … one woman, one woman ….”

While in the gospel reading, the labourers who were the first to be employed felt that farmer-owner was unfair in paying them the same amount as those employed later on, we should rejoice that many more souls are receiving God’s one reward of Heaven. Beloved the truth is that we cannot merit Heaven simply by our own efforts. It is, rather, the sacrifice of Jesus which has opened the gate of Heaven for us. So God’s reward to us is a generous gift to both the first-comers and the last-minute-comers. We are all precious in God’s sight: whether we became Christians from “infancy” or we are late converts – let us remember the gracious reward to the repentant thief on the cross. Hence, in our parish life, let us avoid the attitude of MSc (Mr. /Mad Special Christian/Catholic); for every parishioner is special to God.

Finally, we can learn from the gospel reading that God calls us to Heaven at different times. In the parable, some were called to work at daybreak, others at 9am, 12 noon, 3pm and even 5pm (11th hour). Similarly God calls us to Heaven at different times. Age doesn’t determine the calling time, for in God’s eyes a thousand years are like a day (Ps. 90). Therefore, like the workers who were ready with their tools as they awaited someone to employ them, we should look forward to our calling by God with the tools of faith and good works. Amen!