

## *Lent 2010*



### **Lenten Meditation # 6 - Fifth Sunday in Lent**

#### **LENTEN GARDENS “GOD’S SURPRISING GENEROSITY”**

A vineyard is a different kind of garden. You do not need to worry about planting seeds, because vines can be many years old. There is work to be done, though. Vines need to be pruned. Soil around them needs to be loosened and weeds cleared away. When harvest time comes, more helpers are needed. Owners of large vineyards hire workers to do these tasks.

Jesus told a story about one such owner, who was surprisingly generous (Matthew 20:1-16). He went out early in the morning to hire laborers and agreed to give them the usual day's pay. Every three hours during the day he went out again and hired more men. Then, a surprising thing happened. The latecomers received a full day's pay, even though they had worked only a short time. So did those who came at noon. When the early hires came, they expected to be paid more. Hadn't they earned it? But they received only the amount originally agreed to. Was that fair?

Jesus is illustrating a different kind of economics. The latecomers had not earned the full pay, but they were people in need. The owner saw them not as “hired hands” but as human beings. They had the same needs as the others.

God is like that vineyard owner. We shortchange God, if we think that faith is only a system for earning our way in life, trying to do enough good to make up for the bad. With amazing grace, God forgives and extends a wonderful acceptance to all. Some people may feel that they deserve more, but God acts with surprising generosity. Jesus invites all to come to him.

We should not take advantage of God's love. It is better to live faithfully throughout our lives. The early workers spent the day working, but assured of receiving the income they needed. The latecomers spent most of the day worrying about having food to put on their table. God wants us all to be nourished and to know life's rewards.

