



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
September 20, 2026

Late Bloomers

Fr. Joseph Juknialis

Human beings grow and mature at different paces. Turning twenty-one is no marker of maturity. We've all known the ten-year-old whom people say is already an old man because of how he thinks and acts. Just as surely, we've known the forty-year-old who still acts and dresses like a teenager. If this is true with human growth, would it not be true as well with growth in faith?

This Sunday's parable of the landowner who pays all his laborers the same even though they have not all worked the same amount of time often sparks the comment that it's not good business sense. But the parable is not about business. It's about how we all

come to faith at different times in life, all according to God's plan, not ours. Why then do some complain about deathbed conversions as being unfair? Who's to say when someone finally catches up to God's love and goodness? Too often, human wisdom and divine wisdom spin in different worlds.

Pope Benedict XVI once commented on this gospel's wisdom and how we should be patient with young people as they seek the sacraments. Jesus was patient with us, he said, so we should follow his lead. Federico Lombardi, SJ, the Vatican spokesman for Pope Benedict, reported that the Pope had commented, "I used to be more strict about this, but the example of Christ led me to become more welcoming in cases in which, perhaps, there is not a mature and solid faith, but there is a glimmer, a desire of communion with the Church." †



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A Word from Pope Leo XIV

It is a great sign of hope—especially in our times, traversed by so many conflicts and wars—to know that the Church is a people in which women and men of different nationalities, languages, and cultures live together in faith: it is...a reminder and prophecy of that unity and peace to which God the Father calls all his children.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, ROME,
MARCH 11, 2026



Sunday Readings

Isaiah 55:6–9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways.

Philippians 1:20c–24, 27a

For to me life is Christ, and death is gain.

Matthew 20:1–16a

[Jesus said,] "Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I look to God for justice or mercy?
- Do I seek to be fair to others or to be generous?



Why Should We Forgive?

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

forgive those who hate us?

First, because God has forgiven us greater sins than our enemies have ever committed against us. The man who thinks he has no need of pardon is apt to be the most unforgiving of men. Only the merciful will ever receive mercy. Only the forgiving will ever be forgiven.

And the second reason for forgiving is to prevent the multiplication of hate, which is a seed and grows like a weed. If a number of men are standing in a line, and the first slaps the cheek of the second, and the second the third, the only way to stop hate would be for one man in that crowd to turn his other cheek. By doing so, he would say, "If I hate you, I add my quota to the sum total of the world's hate. This I refuse to do. I will

kill your hate. I will drive it even from the face of the earth. And I will do it by loving you."

The real test, then, of the Christian is not how much he loves his friends (for do not the heathens do this?) but, rather, how much he loves his enemies. God cannot write on the pages of a heart when they are covered with the scribbling of hate. But he can write straight even with crooked lines on the blank page of he who loves. For by putting love where we do not find it, then everyone becomes lovable. †

**Only the forgiving
will be forgiven.**

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Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Fulton J. Sheen: Seven Pearls of Wisdom"

The dominant note of the modern world is confusion. [The world] has not only lost its way, it has even thrown away the map. It stands bewildered, lost, stunned, afraid to enthuse or even trust, lest its new love prove as unfaithful and as fickle as the others. When brought face to face with the certitude a Catholic has in his faith or the peace of soul and security and the feeling of "being at home" a convert has in coming into the Church, the confused modern attributes it to excessive credulity, to the surrender of reason, to priestcraft—in a word, to anything and everything except the real reason, namely, the discovery of truth.

Note: The beatification Mass for Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen is scheduled for Thursday, September 24.

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.



Wondrous God, we ask for the grace to see as you see and to reflect your face to each person we meet. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 21–26

Monday, St. Matthew: Eph 4:1–7, 11–13 / Mt 9:9–13

Tuesday, Weekday: Prv 21:1–6, 10–13 / Lk 8:19–21

Wednesday, St. Pius of Pietrelcina: Prv 30:5–9 / Lk 9:1–6

Thursday, Weekday: Eccl 1:2–11 / Lk 9:7–9

Friday, Weekday: Eccl 3:1–11 / Lk 9:18–22

Saturday, Weekday: Eccl 11:9–12:8 / Lk 9:43b–45



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