

## **25TH SUND. ORD. (A) A GENEROUS GOD**

The readings of today make it clear to us that we have a totally different idea from that of God. Moreover, it is clear that we do not know Him and it is difficult to understand Him. We learn also about how good, generous and merciful He is, more than we know.

Isaiah invites us to seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is still near. This is because He will abundantly pardon the sins of the wicked. He is not what we think He is.

Jesus, in the gospel, is teaching about how God wants all to experience His generosity, and wants everyone to enter into heaven.

He is inviting us to work towards our salvation. It does not matter who we are, when we are converted, or received baptism. Every now and then, He is giving us the opportunity to repent and come back to Him. That is why in the first reading, Isaiah appeals to the wicked to forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return to the Lord, that He may have mercy on him.

It is true that God's ways are totally different from ours because we give to people what they have worked for, but God does not reward people in the same way. The parable tells us that God gives His grace to us more than we deserve. His grace is bestowed on the Jews who were called first, and the Gentiles who were called later, in the same way and measure. It does not depend on our strength, or the position we hold, or status in life or in the Church, but on His generosity and love.

Like the labourers who were called first, we sometimes think that those of us who are cradle Catholics will receive more grace than those who joined the Church later. We have to ask ourselves whether what we do deserve any reward at all? Do we repent every day, and seek the Lord day and night?

"What shall we say then? That God is unjust? Out of the question! For speaking to Moses, He said: I am gracious to those to whom I am gracious and I take pity on those whom I take pity. So it is not a matter of what any person wants or what any person does, but only of God having mercy," (Rom. 9:14-16).

St Paul, in the second reading, is saying that Christ would be

honoured in his body, whether by life or death. It means he belonged to Christ whether alive or dead, and thus his aim was to please Him. He wanted to live in such a way that the Church would grow to know Christ. He is dead, but Christ is honoured because of his message he left behind about his experience with Christ. He was called late and not even among the twelve apostles, but he received an apostle's reward. As he told Timothy, he did not deserve the graces he received because of his past life, but it was by the generosity and love of God. "Do not be ashamed, then, of witnessing for our Lord. Instead, take your part in suffering for the Good News, as God gives you the strength for it. He saved us and called us to be His own people, not because of what we have done, but because of His own purpose and grace," (1Tim. 1:8-9). God is a merciful, generous, and loving Father; He does not treat us according to our sins, nor pay us according to