

Questions for the teacher, Matthew 25:1-13

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost, Year A

By Gerardo Oberman, Argentina

Re-interpretation of *Matthew 25:1-13*

Translated from Spanish by Katie Fiegenbaum

Perhaps you are asking me, teacher
to be numb to the needs
of those who have been mistaken in life?
Perhaps you expect me to continue on my path
without consideration for who is by my side,
who asks me for something that I can give,
who waits for a gesture of solidarity.
Perhaps I should judge my neighbours
for their forgetfulness, for their exhaustion,
for their mistakes or for anything else.

Was it not my mission, the one you taught me,
to clothe the naked,
to break bread with the hungry,
to give water to those who are thirsty,
to visit those who are lonely,
to accompany those in need,
to liberate those who are oppressed?
Should I deny them a little oil
just to be able to save myself?
Could I, in your name,
abandon others outside?
Oh, how beautiful the celebration will be,
how abundant the table will be,
how generous the groom will be....

Can I ignore the cries
of those who also want to be part
of the celebration of your Realm?

I cannot, Jesus.
I am sorry, but I cannot.
Perhaps I will stay outside,
perhaps my oil will not be enough
to await you with my lamp lit.
But it would not be true to your Gospel
if I thought solely of me,
if my aim was to save myself in solitude.

I do not know the day, nor the time that you will arrive
that the generous celebration of your Realm
will be heralded with music and with dancing,
with wine and with abundance,
that the hour of justice and fulfilment
will have arrived once and for all.

Even so, good Jesus,
I cannot selfishly hoard that oil...
Someone needs it, someone is asking for it
and someone would be left out of your celebration
if we do not share it.

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