

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Sep 21st 2014

I have always loved this parable for a personal reason: As someone whose last name begins with a Z and a U, I am generally always last. I can tell the harried clerk to just check the last page, the last name on any list, and I'm probably there.

My smugness with the idea that the last shall be first, finally, speaks to me today. In a society where it seems we are always trying to make sure that someone didn't get more than we did, that we didn't lose out in some way, the words of today's Gospel make me pause. We are obsessed with being first and behind ahead of others. I think we should strive to do our best, to challenge ourselves. Too often, however, we look at others and don't pay attention to ourselves. I can hear my slightly whiny voice: Hey, she got more than me. Or exclaiming or thinking to myself, Hey, that's not fair at some perceived slight if a co-worker appeared to get a better deal than me.

Instead of looking outward at what others have, I need to look inward. I need to pay attention to how I am living my life, whether I am reflecting God's love and charity. Being envious of others is a waste of time and energy. Instead, I need to turn that destructive energy and thinking to me, to what I'm doing and to what I can do better. If I start feeling that green tint come over me, I need to stop, take a deep breath and thank God for all I have. I need to remember that God's love is with me wherever I am, whether I am last or I am first.

My lovely mother Rita used to tell me "to mind my own beeswax" when I would whine that a brother or sister got more than me. It was one of the many funny expressions she would come up with. It is fitting that today is her birthday. I pray that I "mind my own beeswax" and be thankful for what I have. I pray, in the words of today's first reading, to seek the Lord and call him because he is generous in forgiving.

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