

PARABLES OF MERCY

The Landowner and the Labourers

Matthew 20 : 1 - 20

*So the last will be first,
and the first will be last.*



Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has initiated this Year of Mercy as an opportunity for pilgrimage, reflection and commitment to action that will enable Mercy to be made concrete and practical in our own local communities.

Thank you for your willingness to enter into this time of prayer and reflection. May it be an experience of Mercy which will enable you to further respond with Mercy and compassion in your local community.

Lectio / Visio Divina

Lectio Divina is a Latin term meaning “Reading with God”.

Visio Davina is a Latin term meaning “seeing or looking with God”.

We hope that the parable windows will be a Lectio / Visio Divina for the community of pilgrims in the Year of Mercy so that we may also “See with God”.

The practice of sacred reading has been practiced in the church for centuries, and has its origin in the monastic life as a pathway for prayer with scripture. It leads us gently into a deeper relationship with Christ as we open ourselves to him. It is the ultimate DIY spiritual project.

Brendan Lodge Photography

Photographs by



There are four steps in the traditional practice of Lectio Divina. But they do not need to be followed in this particular sequence.

1. Lectio Visio (reading-looking)

Look at the window slowly,
read the scripture ...become aware of a particular
word - phrase - colour - object or character.
(There is a page for your jottings inside the back cover.)

2. Meditatio (reflection)

Let the significant word / object / colour / character fill
your mind without straining to analyse them.
You are in God's presence,
let the Holy Spirit lead your understanding.

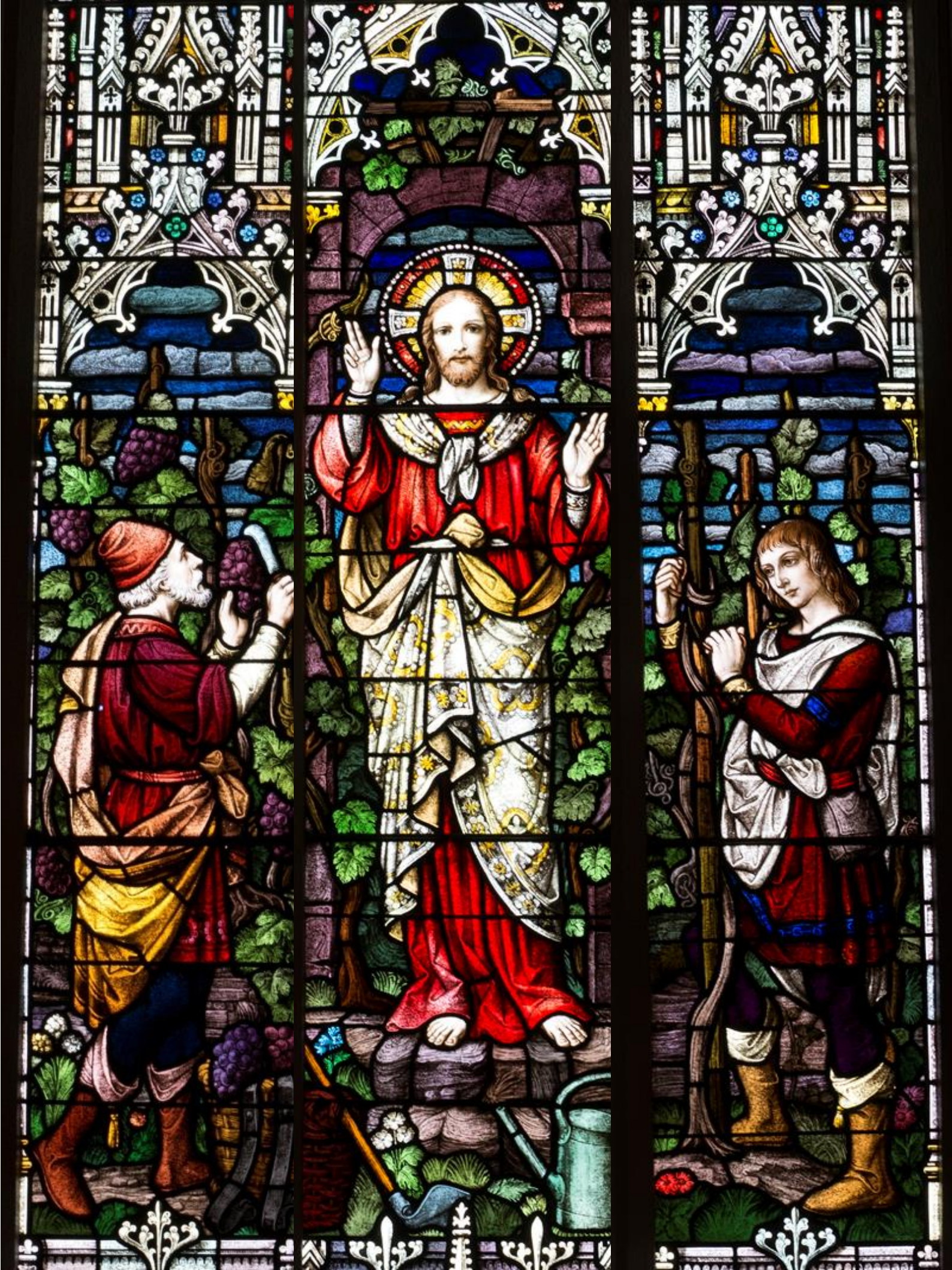
3. Oratio (prayer)

Allow your heart to speak to God,
in words or emotions inspired by the parable
or the thoughts that have come to you while reflecting.

4. Contemplatio (rest)

Let go of ideas and words and allow yourself to rest in the
presence of God in simple wordless contemplation.

(Adapted from the
Lectio Divina pamphlet - NZ Catholic Bishops Conference 2011)



The Landowner and the Labourers

He sent them into his vineyard
The landowner went again at noon,
at three and about five.
Each received the usual daily wage.
I am generous.

1. Look and be open to the parable window
Look for a particular
colour, character, object, concept or word that
may seem significant...
2. Let that which is significant
fill your mind without analysing,
you are in God's presence... let the Holy Spirit
lead your understanding ...
3. Allow your heart to speak to God
as you are inspired by the parable...
4. How am I called to respond?
Allow yourself to rest in the presence of God ...

At each of the parable windows,
there are three basic questions ...

- As I look and ponder the parable window
what do I notice? Why?
- Where is love, or mercy or faithfulness,
compassion or forgiveness in this parable?
- How am I called to respond?

A space for journaling:

(Please jot down your thoughts and insights for further reflection)

You may like to enter the parable window through your imagination, as a character or an object ... actually allowing yourself to experience the Mercy and Love of God.

The Labourers in the Vineyard

Matthew 20



“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous? So the last will be first, and the first will be last.



This window was donated by the Aisher family in remembrance of their son Frank who was killed in action 12/10/1917 in Belgium

Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Palmerston North – Year of Mercy 2016