

September 20, 2020 | 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

[IS 55:6-9](#)

[PS 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18](#)

[PHIL1:20C-24, 27A](#)

[MT 20:1-16A](#)

Bro. Steve Herro, O.Praem.

How do you define “essential worker”?

One of the most painful memories that I will have of the Coronavirus pandemic is the belittling of certain professionals and their work. A past campaign opponent of my state’s governor went to war when he publicly stated that the Governor has never had a “real job” in his life (the insulting comment was made in the heat of battle when Wisconsin businesses were closed).

Actually, before graduating from college, he worked in a cheese factory, helping to ensure a safe dairy product for millions of consumers. Before graduating, he assisted elderly residents in daily tasks in a Wisconsin nursing home. Before being elected governor, he was a classroom teacher and school superintendent. So, helping to form young people is not a “real job”?

Today’s Gospel presents a parable with a landowner employer and a number of day laborers. Some laborers are concerned and surprised that the owner decided to pay each worker equally. But did not some work many hours more than others? And, therefore, do they not deserve greater pay? The parable ends, “Thus the last will be first, and the first will be last” (the same ending in the parable about the rich young man that immediately precedes today’s Gospel).

Why do some people want to produce a wedge between members of the same class? It seems to me that Jesus’ point in today’s Gospel is that we all have an equal shot at the kingdom of God, not simply those who appear holiest, brightest, or the most physically attractive.

Labor Day was two weeks ago, but during a political campaign season when certain workers are lauded over others, it is necessary to remind ourselves and others that all workers are essential workers. And, try as we might, can anyone rationalize why the average CEO earns \$278 for every dollar earned by a typical worker (Mishel, Laurence and Wolfe, Julia. “[CEO compensation has grown 940% since 1978](#),” Economic Policy Institute, August 4, 2019)?

Steve Herro professed solemn vows to St. Norbert Abbey, De Pere, Wisc. in 1991. He has served the Church in a number of social justice capacities and blogs at stevenherro.wordpress.com. In addition to his interest in Catholic social action, he is also a degreed librarian and spiritual direction intern.