



Reflection from Ben Babaran

As of September 20, there have been 278 labor actions in 425 locations across the U.S. in 2023. The major strikes happening right now in the U.S. are: United Auto Workers (UAW), Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), Writers Guild of America (WGA), Unite Here Local 11, and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. In all these strikes, the workers want higher pay or compensation, better benefits and improved working conditions.

The Gospel given to us for our meditation this weekend describes for us in the form of a parable how God goes above and beyond the welfare of the workers. In the parable, the landowner's concern seems to have been the welfare of those who had no work and would probably therefore not have enough for their families at the end of the day. The landowner was being very faithful to the Deuteronomic code which enjoined on all Israelites the obligation of providing for the indigent in their midst. His concern was not the amount of profit but rather the wellbeing of those who had not been hired.

The parable then, gives us an insight into the mind and heart of God. Surely, God is just; but He is also outrageously generous and merciful at the same time. We do not get what we deserve. Rather, God gives us more than we deserve. Today, He calls each one of us to be a generous people. We are called to have that all-encompassing non discriminating love if we are to be members of the Kingdom.

This reminds me of the story:

There was a guy who died and was being given a tour of heaven, and he saw a friend of his drive by in a beautiful Mercedes. He said, "Boy, this is great!"

"Oh, yes," St. Peter said, "your friend was really generous on earth; we had a lot to work with. Your transportation up here depends on your generosity down there." Then St. Peter gave him his transportation: a Honda motor scooter. He said, "Wait a minute, he gets a Mercedes, and I get a scooter?"

"That's right, it's all we had to work with." So, the guy drove off in a huff.

A week later Peter saw this guy all smiles and said, "You are feeling better now?"

The guy said, "Yea, I have ever since I saw my preacher go by on a skateboard!"

Peace,

Ben