



A weekly reflection by members
of the Precious Blood Community

August 21, 2024

Vicky Otto

“Are you envious because I am generous?”
(Matthew 20:15)

As I write this reflection, I heard on the news today that there are 91 days until the presidential election. No matter where you live in this country, I'm sure your televisions, internet streams, mailboxes, and newspapers are full of election ads. The ads for this campaign seem to mirror the divisions in our world. Rather than promoting their candidates' attributes or why they are the most qualified person for the post they are running for, most ads point out how their candidate will save you from the evils perpetrated by others. We can point fingers at those who don't look like us, sound like us, or act like us all under the guise of protection rather than determining how to move forward in the future together as a community. The Gospel today of Matthew tells the story of the landowner paying the workers, some of whom come much later than others. I believe there are two hidden lessons that Jesus offers that we can learn from today, especially in the times we find ourselves in.

The first lesson comes from the landowner. The landowner asks, "Are you envious because I am generous?" This phrase is translated from a Greek idiom: "Is your eye evil because I am good?" This idiom is where the term, I'm sure you have heard before, "evil eye" comes from. Jesus points to a more profound issue than the pay for each worker. In an earlier part of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus shared that "the eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is full of darkness." It is time for us to have a vision check. Precious Blood spirituality calls us to see those who stand before us as Christ. Period. If everyone is to be included in the circle of Christ's love that was given to us through the Precious Blood, then the stranger can not be seen as the enemy or foe.

Many people who hear this gospel story focus on the "last shall be first." However, that focus should be on the generosity of the landowner. It doesn't matter the first or the last; what matters is that the landowner chooses to give each worker enough to meet their needs. It sometimes seems inconceivable to understand that there are no degrees regarding the love God offers each of us. We are all promised one hundred percent of God's love, no matter where we are, what we have done, and what we have failed to do. God's love can never be earned, only accepted. All we have to do is always be open to that love.

I invite you today to take these two lessons to heart as we face the craziness of the election season we find ourselves in. First, ignore all political ads and commentaries, especially those who point fingers at others. Check your vision to ensure that you see through the eyes of the light of love and compassion that Jesus teaches rather than through the dreaded "evil eye." When our vision is clear, and we are seeing through the eyes of light, we can embrace each day the love God is giving us and share that with others. Our spirituality has given us these gifts; now, we are called to share them with others.

Vicky Otto is a Companion with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and currently serves as the Executive Director of the Precious Blood Spirituality Institute. To learn more about the Institute, visit: pbspiritualityinstitute.org.

This weekly reflection is made available to all who are part of our Precious Blood family. Feel free to share it with others. Would you be willing to write a reflection? If so, please contact Vicky Otto at votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org