

Thoughts on the Daily Word

20th Week of Year. Wednesday 19th August. Readings: Ezekiel 34:1-11; Psalm: Deut. 22; Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16.

Many years ago, on one of my pilgrimages to Medjugorje, I passed through road junctions packed with men standing around. I asked our driver what that was about, and he replied that they were men hoping for work. I immediately thought of this parable but also of the many stories that I had read of in times past in own country of men turning up a factory gates looking for work. Poverty and starvation were everyday realities then and now in so many countries. I was also reminded of the Indian workers laid off during the beginning of the pandemic and forced to walk hundreds of miles back to their own villages, all without any help. The furlough scheme in our own country allayed some worries but only for a time. It has taken centuries for us to develop leaders and institutions to at least try to ensure that hunger and deprivation are avoided in difficult times. Even so, we, one of the most advanced and wealthiest nations in the world still have a massive need for foodbanks. Today's challenge in Ezekiel is about bad leadership, mired in incompetence and corruption, so common, even today. The Gospel provides us with the image of a good leader, one who cares for all. Maybe it is a good image of a basic wage for all!