



LIVING THE GOSPEL

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time
4th October, 2026

Theme: "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it."

Gathering Prayer

Facilitator: Almighty ever-living God, who in the abundance of your kindness surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you, pour out your mercy upon us to pardon what conscience dreads and to give what prayer does not dare to ask. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 21: 33-43

³³ 'Listen to another parable.

There was a man, a landowner. Who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower; then he leased it to tenants and went abroad. ³⁴ When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵ But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. ³⁶ Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. ³⁷ Finally he sent his son to them thinking, "They will respect my son" he said. ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and take over his inheritance." ³⁹ So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to these tenants?" ⁴¹ They answered, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease those vineyards to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him at the proper time.' ⁴² Jesus said to them,

'Have you never read in the scriptures:

*The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
this is the Lord's doing and we marvel at it?'*

⁴³ 'I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

Gospel Focus

The allegory in today's gospel reading is a bit dark and quite on the nose. Using the same vineyard imagery that we have been hearing for the past several weeks, Jesus tells the story of Israel and the prophets that God has sent, each meeting the same fate-rejections by the people. Finally, God sends his own Son, but he is treated much the same. In the parable, the workers find even more reasons to kill the landowner's son-there is an inheritance to claim. In this last action there is a great irony, should we broaden the parable further. The heavenly landowner does indeed offer an inheritance, eternal life. But in our rejection of the Son he sends, by our own anxious search for control, we reject that inheritance God so freely offers. However, through and in spite of our own rejection of God's anointed is the fullness of God's love revealed in his death and resurrection. Christ becomes the cornerstone in fulfillment of Psalm 118, offering each of us a share of the vineyard, along with the instruction to bear fruit.

Gospel Reflection

The situation described in today's gospel can be read as a peasant uprising against an oppressive landowner. Weary of their landlessness and powerlessness, the tenants do away with all the landowner's envoys and even his son, the heir apparent, hoping to gain control of the land themselves. Verse 40 then poses a critical question: What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do? The response is swift and brutal: violence breeds even more violence, and the tenants will be put to a miserable death. One way in which this parable can be read is as a commentary of the futility of violence to accomplish change.

A more traditional reading of this parable is that it is an allegory, in which the vineyard represents Israel, the tenants are Israel's leaders, the vineyard owner is God, the messengers are the prophets, and the son is Jesus. There are also clear allusions to a familiar parable from the prophet Isaiah that we hear in the first reading. But there is a decided difference in the endings of the two parables. In Isaiah, when the vineyard owner is disappointed in the lack of fruit, he destroyed the vineyard. In Jesus' parable, the vineyard is not destroyed, but rather entrusted to new leaders. In both parables, a focal point is the necessity of bearing fruit and the inability of the current leadership to cultivate the desired fruit. An additional twist is that if the parable is an allegory of salvation history, the inheritance that God's people long to claim is a free gift of the son; it need not be wrested from the owner. If the vineyard owner is God, would the response even to the death of the son not be forbearance, loving-kindness, and extending one more opportunity for repentance, rather than violent destruction?

In the context of Matthew's Gospel, the parable is aimed at the religious leaders that oppose Jesus, and it points toward the necessity of new leadership. Some interpret the "others" to whom the vineyard is entrusted as the Gentile church that "supplants" Israel. This interpretation should be firmly rejected. In the gospel narrative, the change envisioned is from Jewish leaders who oppose Jesus to Jews who follow him. By Matthew's time Jesus' disciples, predominantly Jewish Christians, understood themselves the "new tenants," even as they struggled to define themselves in relationship to their siblings, Pharisaic Judaism.

The parable poses a searing question regarding leadership in any organization, institution or nation. If the leaders are not cultivating the fruitfulness of all members, then the leadership must be entrusted to others who will do so. Within the literary context of the gospel, hope is held out that current leaders could repent and become fruitfulness in others. But the parable also notes that vintage time is near-code language for the eschatological time-the moment when time to change runs out and the decisions made all along have finality. The gospel invites us to insist on having leaders who can cultivate fruitful abundance for all and to pursue nonviolent means of bringing about change in leadership when that is needed.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Isaiah 5:1-7

¹ Let me sing for my beloved the song of my friend for his vineyard. My beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. ² He dug, cleared it of stones, and planted it with red grapes. In the middle he built a tower, he hewed a press there too. He expected it to yield fine grapes: wild grapes were all it yielded. ³ And now, citizens of Jerusalem and people of Judah, I ask you to judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴ What more could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done? Why, when I expected it to yield fine grapes, has it yielded wild ones?

⁵ Very well, I shall tell you what I am going to do with my vineyard: I shall take away its hedge, for it to be grazed on, and knock down its wall, for it to be trampled on. ⁶ I shall command the clouds to rain no rain on it. ⁷ Now, the vineyard of Yahweh and Sabaoth is the House of Israel, and the people of Judah the plant he cherished. He expected fair judgement, but found injustice, uprightness, but found cries of distress.

Responsorial Reading — Psalms 80: 9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20

R: The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel. (Isaiah 5:7A)

You brought a vine out of Egypt; to plant it you drove out the nations.
It stretched out its branches to the sea, to the Great River it stretched out its shoots. (**R**)

Then why have you broken down its walls? It is plucked by all who pass by.
It is ravaged by the boar of the forest, devoured by the beasts of the field (**R**)

God of hosts, turn again, we implore, look down from the heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted. (**R**)

And we shall never forsake you again; give us life that we may call upon your name.
God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved. (**R**)

Second Reading — Philippians 4:6-9

⁶ Never worry about anything; but tell God all your desires of everything in prayer and petition shot through with gratitude, ⁷ and the peace of God which is beyond our understanding will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brothers, let your minds be filled with everything that is true, everything that is honourable, everything that is upright and pure, everything that we love and admire-with whatever is good and praiseworthy.⁹ Keep adding everything you learnt from me and were told by me and have heard or seen me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

443. Peter could recognize the transcendent character of the Messiah's divine sonship because Jesus had clearly allowed it to be so understood. To his accusers' question before the Sanhedrin, "Are you the Son of God, then?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am." (Lk 22:70; cf. Mt 26:64; Mk 14:61-62) Well before this, Jesus referred to himself as "the Son" who knows the Father, as distinct from the "servants" God had earlier sent

to his people; he is superior even to the angels.(Cf. Mt 11:27; 21:34-38; 24:36) He distinguished his sonship from that of his disciples by never saying "our Father", except to command them: "You, then, pray like this: 'Our Father'", and he emphasized this distinction, saying "my Father and your Father".(Mt 5:48; 6:8-9; 7:21; Lk 11:13; Jn 20:17)

755. "The Church is a *cultivated field*, the tillage of God. On that land the ancient olive tree grows whose holy roots were the prophets and in which the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles has been brought about and will be brought about again. That land, like a choice vineyard, has been planted by the heavenly cultivator. Yet the true vine is Christ who gives life and fruitfulness to the branches, that is, to us, who through the Church remain in Christ, without whom we can do nothing.(LG 6; cf. 1 Cor 39; Rom 11:13-26; Mt 21:32-43 and parallels; Isa 51-7; Jn 15:1-5)

756. "Often, too, the Church is called the *building* of God. The Lord compared himself to the stone which the builders rejected, but which was made into the corner-stone. On this foundation the Church is built by the apostles and from it the Church receives solidity and unity. This edifice has many names to describe it: the house of God in which his *family* dwells; the household of God in the Spirit; the dwelling-place of God among men; and, especially, the holy *temple*. This temple, symbolized in places of worship built out of stone, is praised by the Fathers and, not without reason, is compared in the liturgy to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. As living stones we here on earth are built into it. It is this holy city that is seen by John as it comes down out of heaven from God when the world is made anew, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.(LG 6; Cf. 1 Cor 3:9; Mt 21:42 and parallels; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7; Ps 118:22; 1 Cor 3:11; 1 Tim 3:15; Eph 2:19-22; Rev 21:3; 1 Pet 2:5; Rev 21:1-2)

Sharing and Discussion

1. In your own words, how would you summarize what happens in this parable? What part of the story stands out to you the most?
2. God sent prophets (servants) and ultimately His Son to speak to the tenants. Through the Sacraments, the Church, or people in your life, how does God try to speak to you today—and how do you respond when the message is hard to hear?
3. The chief priests and Pharisees felt secure in their religious status, which blinded them to Jesus. How can we, as committed Catholics, guard against spiritual complacency or the subtle trap of religious entitlement?

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: Loving God, hear these prayers of your beloved ones and give us the wisdom to discern your voice in a noisy and anxious world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Facilitator: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Looking to deepen your faith and connect with fellow parishioners? Join us for our "Living the Gospel" Bible study and sharing session at the parish. Together, we will reflect on God's Word, grow in faith, and journey together in fellowship.

Every Saturday

Time: 9.30 – 11.00 am

Venue: Level 3, Rm 03-06

All are welcome! For more information, please contact;

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Reflection material available on Parish Website under – (Weekly Bible Sharing - Living the Gospel)

References for the Living the Gospel Reflection:

- 1) Gospel notes taken from the Navarre Bible
- 2) Gospel reflection and Living Liturgy are taken from "Living Liturgy for Sunday and Solemnities" by Order of St Benedict. Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. Reprinted with permission.
- 3) CCC references are taken from Catechism of the Catholic Church