

- I always chuckle at that line in this Gospel: “...*he leased it to tenants, and went on a journey.*”
- We are tempted to wryly comment: “*And how did that work out for you?*”
- When you look at the world, sometimes we think it might better read: “*He left the toddlers in charge of the china shop, and went on a journey.*”

-
- Jesus’ parable today speaks to our obligation 1) to follow the will of God, 2) to work for Him in producing fruits of faith, and 3) our obligation for giving thanks for all we have received in life.
 - We see how the evil tenants in this parable love the benefits of the vineyard, but resent mightily their obligation to give the owner his due portion of the harvest...conveniently ignoring the fact that it is through the owner’s favor that they are working the vineyard at all.
 -
 - This is one of Jesus’ most obvious parable allusions—God the vineyard owner, and the tenants who, in its broadest interpretation represent everyone in the world, resenting giving God His due—reverence and obedience—to the point of even killing His servants (the prophets) and even His Son (Jesus) who hold us to account.
 - The predictable outcome? That the vineyard owner (God the Father) will give the vineyard (His kingdom) to those who DO follow His will...His will as provided in His instruction relayed by His messengers—the prophets and the inspired authors of scripture, and most of all His Son...
 - ...for His Son IS that cornerstone—that foundation upon which the entire structure of salvation depends.

-
- God has given us a garden to care for our needs, but His greatest gift to us is our very existence.
 - I often muse about that. There is absolutely NO necessity that I came into existence. Indeed, of the millions of little spermatozoa

that could have penetrated the ovum, it was that specific one that brought me to life and very existence.

- Would my soul have been given to another combination? If the Bob spermatozoon had beat out the Glenn one, would the Glenn consciousness and soul exist, or another? Who knows?
- Contemplation of such things should give us even greater realization of our obligation to give thanks to God our Creator, for He willed MY existence...to give God His due, and to follow Him with our whole heart...because in giving me life and existence, He has given me the privilege of His love and, by His own promise and will, existence in eternity.
- Whether I exist in that love...or not...is up to my free will and choice.

-
- And thus our solemn obligation to God as our Creator...and to God our Savior—incarnate in Christ—for giving us this “second opportunity” of sorts for repentance and coming to Him—by rejecting the way of the evil tenancy and working to produce fruits for the master’s harvest.
 - Jesus’ suffering for our salvation and the opportunity to rest in the arms of our loving Father for all eternity magnifies without limit the obligation we have by our mere existence...an obligation to do His will always—loving God and neighbor—and to give thanks for all that we have been given.
 - Now the vineyard represents faith as well...the Jewish faith most immediately as Jesus speaks to the scribes and the Pharisees, but also the Christian—and most especially our Catholic—faith...
 - ...for the Church is also a vineyard; the Word of God—especially the Gospel—the good seed ready to produce much fruit.
 - God provides all we need to work for Him in leading others to salvation—His Word, and especially His grace, which we elicit

through our prayer, our own words, and our example of charity and fidelity to God.

- As St. Paul writes about his own evangelizing vineyard work: “*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.*” (1 Corinthians 3:6)
- Likewise, we plant by our words...we water by our encouragement and (sincere) example of following God’s Word...and it is God who brings growth to the seed.
-
- Certainly some seed will fail to grow despite our best efforts. That is the theme of Jesus’ parable of the sower.
- We realize that if many refused to believe the apostles...if many refused to believe Jesus Himself...we cannot expect to be always successful. But we work nonetheless.
- As Paul also wrote: “*I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews...To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*” (1 Corinthians 9:19-22)
- By that passage Paul also highlights the need to walk with those who are coming to faith—not to despise, but rather to provide answers to their questions...to give them hope by our own example of faith and devotion to Jesus.
- This is why St. Peter writes: “*Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence...*” (1 Peter 3:15)
- Such defense and confident surety in our own faith is how we can water the seed, so that God’s ever-constant offerings of grace may penetrate what is often the hard outer shell of doubt and skepticism.
- And in producing fruit for God, we might be received with His voice: “*Well done, good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your master.*” (Matthew 25:23)

Reading 1

[Is 5:1-7](#)

Let me now sing of my friend,
my friend's song concerning his vineyard.
My friend had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside;
he spaded it, cleared it of stones,
and planted the choicest vines;
within it he built a watchtower,
and hewed out a wine press.
Then he looked for the crop of grapes,
but what it yielded was wild grapes.

Now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard:
What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I had not done?

Why, when I looked for the crop of grapes,
did it bring forth wild grapes?

Now, I will let you know
what I mean to do with my vineyard:
take away its hedge, give it to grazing,
break through its wall, let it be trampled!

Yes, I will make it a ruin;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
but overgrown with thorns and briars;

I will command the clouds
not to send rain upon it.

The vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah are his cherished plant;
he looked for judgment, but see, bloodshed!
for justice, but hark, the outcry!

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 80:9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20](#)

R. (Is 5:7a) The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

A vine from Egypt you transplanted;
you drove away the nations and planted it.
It put forth its foliage to the Sea,
its shoots as far as the River.

R. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Why have you broken down its walls,
so that every passer-by plucks its fruit,
The boar from the forest lays it waste,
and the beasts of the field feed upon it?

R. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Once again, O LORD of hosts,
look down from heaven, and see;
take care of this vine,
and protect what your right hand has planted
the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

R. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Then we will no more withdraw from you;
give us new life, and we will call upon your name.
O LORD, God of hosts, restore us;
if your face shine upon us, then we shall be saved.

R. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

Reading II

[Phil 4:6-9](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Have no anxiety at all, but in everything,
by **prayer** and petition, with thanksgiving,
make your requests known to God.
Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters,
whatever is true, whatever is honorable,
whatever is just, whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious,
if there is any excellence
and if there is anything worthy of praise,
think about these things.

Keep on doing what you have learned and received
and heard and seen in me.

Then the God of peace will be with you.

Gospel

[Mt 21:33-43](#)

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people:

"Hear another parable.

There was a landowner who planted a vineyard,
put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower.

Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey.

When vintage time drew near,

he sent his servants to the tenants to obtain his produce.

But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat,
another they killed, and a third they stoned.

Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones,
but they treated them in the same way.

Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking,

'They will respect my son.'

But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another,

'This is the heir.

Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.'

They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?"

They answered him,

"He will put those wretched men to a wretched death

and lease his vineyard to other tenants

who will give him the produce at the proper times."

Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures:

The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

by the Lord has this been done,

and it is wonderful in our eyes?

Therefore, I say to you,

the kingdom of God will be taken away from you

and given to a people that will produce its fruit."