

you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Jn 15:15

Alleluia, alleluia! / I call you friends, says the Lord, / because I have made known to you / everything I have learnt from my Father. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 21:33-43

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

He leased his vineyard to other farmers.

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, '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. When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son" he said. 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." So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They answered, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when the season arrives.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone. This was the Lord's doing and it is wonderful to see?

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

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflections on the Gospel



THE SAVING WORD

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

04 OCTOBER 2020

THE SONG SUNG OVER THE CHURCH

Jesus probably told the parable of the Tenants against the religious leaders in Jerusalem in his day. Having resisted the prophets sent by God, they are now resisting the last of them, namely, himself. As such they have shown themselves to be usurpers, retaining for themselves the 'vineyard' (Israel) and its 'produce' (the life of the people). For them, the arrival of the Kingdom (of God) will mean dispossession and retribution.

The early Church retold the parable in the light of Jesus' death and resurrection, and a belief in his status as God's Son. Also present is a bitter awareness of the *No* given to the Gospel by the bulk of Israel and a sense of the Church itself, made up of Jews and non-Jews, as the community of the Kingdom. Through the continuing presence of the risen Lord (Matthew 28:20), the community can and ought to produce the 'fruits' that God desires.

The long and tragic history of Christian intolerance and persecution of Jews calls for sensitivity in handling texts like this that reflect the early Church's disappointment with Israel. Today we should move on from Christian triumphalism at Jewish expense to concentrate upon the 'fruits' that God looks for from us. God has made the 'rejected stone'—the crucified and risen Lord—the 'cornerstone' of the Church. The question for us is whether the 'song' sung by God over this new vineyard (cf. the First Reading) is one of delight or disappointment. Inevitably, perhaps, a bit of both. In either case it will be a song of love.

Brendan Byrne, SJ

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FIRST READING

Isa 5:1-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The vineyard of the Lord God of hosts is the House of Israel.

Let me sing to my friend the song of his love for his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.

He dug the soil, cleared it of stones, and planted choice vines in it.

In the middle he built a tower, he dug a press there too.

He expected it to yield grapes, but sour grapes were all that it gave.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,

I ask you to judge between my vineyard and me.

What could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done?

I expected it to yield grapes.

Why did it yield sour grapes instead?

Very well, I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard:

I will take away its hedge for it to be grazed on, and knock down its wall for it to be trampled on.

I will lay it waste, unpruned, undug; overgrown by the briar and the thorn.

I will command the clouds to rain no rain on it.

Yes, the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the House of Israel,

and the men of Judah that chosen plant.

He expected justice, but found bloodshed, integrity, but only a cry of distress.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM

Ps 79:9, 12-16, 19-20. R. Isa 5:7

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

1. 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.**



2. 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.**

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

4. 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

Phil 4:6-9

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

Do these things and the God of peace will be with you.

There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that