

OCTOBER MESSAGE SERIES



Week 1: Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time | Sunday, October 4, 2020

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."

First Reading: IS 5:1-7

Second Reading: PHIL 4:6-9

INTRODUCTION

The most important thing you can do in life? Love God – with all your heart, soul, mind. Do this one thing – and everything else will begin to fall in place. Embrace that one thing and everything changes. You move among the world knowing your ultimate purpose. God's love guides your actions, it guides your conscience. The love of God is your cornerstone.

We focus in on what it means to be Created and Called to Love, our overall theme of the year, and in our breaking open of "Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home.

Laudato Si' - 10

[St. Francis] loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS & DISCUSSION

First Reading IS 5:1-7: The first reading presents an image of Israel as a vineyard where God, the Divine Creator, has sown seeds. But Israel has failed miserably to produce a good harvest.

Second Reading PHIL 4:6-9: When feelings of anxiety are winning over our hearts and minds – what are we to do? St. Paul tells us: “By prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. ... Then the love and peace of God that surpasses all understanding will win.”

- Have you ever experienced a time of great anxiety? Where did you find relief? When in your everyday life have you encountered “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding”? What’s the one thing that brings you peace? Does prayer play a part?
- St. Paul further encourages us to focus on the positive, on things “true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent and worthy of praise”. What are your “favorites” – the favorite things you do, the books you read, the movies you watch, the way you spend your time – your money? Is there a balance in your life of things that that emulate the values Paul references?
- October 4 marks the Feast of St. Francis. St. Francis found inner peace when he walked away from luxury and power – yet people thought he was mad. They thought he was even more strange when he began calling animals his brothers and sisters. St. Francis is adored by Catholics – and loved by non-Christians around the world. What did Francis figure out that brought him inner peace? What makes the life of St. Francis so inspiring?

Gospel: Jesus is fond of using the vineyard as a setting for His parables. Through The Parable of the Wicked Servants, Jesus is speaking of judgement for what we do, and what we fail to do. How the ungrateful tenants treat the land ends up being the same way they treat everyone, and eventually the Son. Jesus tells the parable to lead the chief priests to conversion. Instead, they turned on Christ. “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone”.

- Christ as the cornerstone – what does that mean to you? How does our work to build up the kingdom suffer when the cornerstone is rejected?
 - *Consider:* In ancient Scripture, God promises to send the cornerstone—His Son—who will provide the firm foundation for their lives, if they would but trust in Him. Paul tells the Ephesians that Christ is the cornerstone that brings all nation’s together as members of God’s family. ... In *Laudato Si'* we read that “Once the human being declares independence from reality and behaves with absolute dominion, the very foundations of our life begin to crumble, for “instead of carrying out his role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature”.[\[95\]](#)

LIVING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE – A fruitful life

The Gospel speaks of vintage time. What season do you feel you are in right now?

- The season of planting? Of growth? Of harvest?
- Of waiting? Of rest? Of gratitude?
- What one thing would you want to focus on to get ready for vintage time?
- What fruits can you produce to make a good harvest?

OCTOBER PRAYER

This is Respect Life Month – the 2020 theme is *Live The Gospel of Life*. Twenty-five years ago, Pope St. John Paul II wrote that the Gospel of life is at the *heart* of Jesus' saving message to the world (*Evangelium vitae* 1). In taking on human flesh, dwelling among us, and sacrificing his very life for our redemption, Christ reveals the profound dignity of every human person – through every stage of life, every level of independence, or any other varying circumstance.

The truth of the Gospel of life is at the foundation of who we are as followers of Christ. In his earthly life, Jesus provided the perfect model for how we are to love our neighbor: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40).

"O Mary" Prayer

*O Mary, bright dawn of the new world, Mother of the living,
To you do we entrust the cause of Life:
Look down, O Mother,
Upon the vast numbers of babies not allowed to be born,
Of the poor whose lives are made difficult,
Of men and women who are victims of brutal violence,
Of the elderly and the sick killed
by indifference or out of misguided mercy.
Grant that all who believe in your Son
May proclaim the Gospel of life with honesty and love
to the people of our time.
Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel
as a gift ever new,
The joy of celebrating it with gratitude
throughout their lives
And the courage to bear witness to it
Resolutely, in order to build;
together with all people of good will,
a civilization of truth and love,
To the praise and glory of God, Creator and lover of life.
AMEN*

- Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*