

Today's readings speak of harvesting grapes in a vineyard. God calls us to work in the vineyard, each doing our part to ensure a good harvest. We gather together each week in the Lord's name and receive Christ in the word and the Eucharist. In today's Gospel, Jesus promises the kingdom of God to those who produce its fruit. We pray that we may be nourished in word and sacrament so that we may go forth to produce fruit for the kingdom.

As we gather together let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

*Profession of Faith: p. 108*

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow as we say) *and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.* For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*Introductory Rite:*

*Greeting:*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

*Penitential Rite:*

My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this celebration, let us call to mind our sins.

Lord Jesus, you are Lord of the harvest: Lord have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you are the way that leads to peace: Christ have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are the tireless servant of the Father: Lord have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

*Opening Prayer:*

Almighty ever-living God, who in the abundance of your kindness surpass the merits and desires of those who entreat you, pour our 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. **Amen**

*Liturgy of the Word:*

*First Reading p. 62*

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 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 briers; 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!

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

*Responsorial Psalm: p. 64*

*Psalm 25: 4-5, 8-9, 10, 14*

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

**R/. 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/.**

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/.**

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/.**

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/.**

*Second Reading p. 66*

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians

*Philippians 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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel p. 66*

*Matthew 21: 33-43*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

**Glory to you, Lord**

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Reflection on the Word:**

In the first parable we hear today, from Isaiah, we hear a condensed history of the Chosen People. Like Eden, this vineyard is tended lovingly by God ("my friend"), its choicest vines fertile, full of life. But like Eden, what it yielded was from outside the goodness of creation. God's wrath flares up with the yield of wild (Hebrew *beushim*, meaning "stinking" or "rotten") grapes. Isaiah proclaims that the LORD will take away its protection, its life-giving rain, its tender care. Though we know that God has forgiven the Chosen People again and again, Isaiah's role as prophet demands he focus the people attention on their sinfulness.

The second parable, told by Jesus to the chief priests, uses the same setting, so no doubt the chief priests recalled the passage from Isaiah as Jesus told the new story. They are quick to judge the greedy, envious tenants, and rightly so, but they fail to make the connection of their role in the parable. So too may we. When do we persist on putting our own self-interest before the landowner's/my friend's/God's? As in the parable immediately preceding this one, the one we heard last Sunday, God entrusts the vineyard, the kingdom, to those who do the work and produce good fruit.

Now that we know what we are called to do, we must ask how we do it. How does our faith bear fruit? Saint Paul tells us. Pursue what is true, honorable, just, pure, and all things worthy of God's praise. This is how our faith is brought to fruition. "Then the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9).

**Question of the Week:** What one specific thing can I do with my time and talents to produce fruit in the vineyard I call home?

**Prayer of the Faithful:**

Saint Paul tells us that by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, we should make our requests known to God, and so we now have the courage to do so.

- For the Church, that we may be made worthy of producing good fruit to build up the kingdom of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those living in regions of the world marked by ongoing hostilities and resentments, that they may find in their hearts a way to reconciliation, acceptance, and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- That we may foster and encourage a true and lasting respect for all human life, especially for the most vulnerable and those at the peripheries, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those who harvest in fields and on farms, in orchards and vineyards, that they may be paid a just wage and treated humanely, let us pray to the Lord.

- For our parish community, that we may work together to bear fruit that helps our neighbor materially and spiritually, let us pray to the Lord.
- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.

Loving God, you have entrusted us with this fruitful planet and your grace to continue the task of building up your kingdom. Provide us with the tools we need to make this world wonderful in your eyes. Hear this and all our prayers through your Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

### Communion Rite

#### The Lord's Prayer: Page 140

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

#### Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

#### Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

#### Prayer after Communion:

Grant us, almighty God, that we may be refreshed and nourished by the Sacrament which we have received, so as to be transformed into what we consume.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

#### Concluding Rite:

#### Final Blessing:

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

Go in the peace of Christ! **Thanks be to God.**