

## 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

### GOSPEL

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Jesus said to the chief priests and 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, but 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.'

(Matthew 21:33-43)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- Vineyards required intensive long-term care. The soil was dug and cleared and a wall erected to discourage animals that may graze on the vines. A watchtower and wine press completed the installation, but the ongoing work of pruning, thinning, supporting the vines and sometimes irrigation was needed.
- A wine press was a large vat where the grapes were trodden. This was connected to a smaller vat, lower down or dug into a hillside, down which the juice flowed. Fermentation began in the lower vat and was completed in jars or skins, from which the wine was served.
- The keystone at the top of a Roman arch was the stone that held all the others in place.

### EXPLORING THE WORD

This parable is a thinly disguised allegory of the blindness of those throughout Israel's history who have been appointed leaders of God's people. It is aimed at the priests and scribes who do not carry out the will of God. There have been some who persecuted and even killed those sent by God. In the son 'finally sent', Christians see Jesus, who was also put to death because his message was troublesome and because he always urged his hearers to produce the fruit of penance. God not only sent his servants, the prophets, but also his own son. But the leaders of the people did not accept him. The kingdom will be taken from them and given to those who have faith in Jesus. This message would have spoken very powerfully to Matthew's community, who were Jewish Christians struggling to move away from their Jewish roots and accept Christ as the Messiah, rejected by his own.

- Who are the 'prophets' of the present age?
- What are they telling us?
- Is their message being heard?
- In what ways are they sometimes rejected?

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

Allow some time for reflection, perhaps using quiet music in the background, before asking participants to share some thoughts on the following:

- In what ways is your life fruitful? In what areas of your life have you 'produced the goods'?
- What has been the keystone of your life in the past? At this present time? Has there been any change?
- What are some of the things that you have rejected? Why?
- Make a list: 'This week I will be fruitful in these ways ...'
- Reflect on the following image this week and ask what fruit you are called to bear:

*Lord Jesus, you are the vine and we are the branches.  
May we bear abundant fruit*

