



## 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)



Matthew 21: 33-43

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.

"When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way.

"Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves. "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." So they seized him, 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 said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

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

"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?"

"Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom."



Reflection:

Close your eyes and take a moment to imagine the time it took for the owner to first clear his land from rocks and weeds, plant the tender vines, create a place where the grapes would be collected and crushed to make wine and build a big fence around his land so that wild animals could not destroy it. Now, imagine God creating the earth and all that is on it, including the creatures of the sea, the air and the land. In both stories, humans are put in charge, not as owners, but as tenants.

Tenants are asked to look after the vineyard, just as we are called to look after God's creation. The tenants in today's story want to do away with the owner and his son. They want to takeover the vineyard, and use it for their own selfish ends.



Table Discussion (at mealtime):

How are we good tenants of all the things God has created? "All Things Bright and Beautiful"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5Cnf0UyHDY>



### **St. Francis of Assisi:**

When Francis was a child, he had everything he wanted. His father had worked hard and made a lot of money. He wanted Francis to spend this money to attract a rich bride, so that Francis would be well looked after for the rest of his life.

Francis spent a lot of this money going out with his rich friends and he was loved for his many stories, adventures and laughter. Francis was always the centre of attention.

As a young man, Francis attracted the attention of a very rich family that had a beautiful daughter. Francis' father was hoping the two would get married.

But God had other plans for Francis.

Aside from the fact that Francis was born in a world of plenty, God had also given him a generous heart. On the way to the market he would often ask his mom for bread, which he would feed to the birds. A few years later, on seeing a poor beggar, Francis gave him all that he had. God began to speak to him about a greater need, not just of money and friends, but of true love and spiritual riches.

The real change in his life came when he was captured in battle and thrown into a dungeon for an entire year. By the time he recovered from a serious illness, he returned to his hometown with a new outlook on life.

Gone were the days that he was the life of the party, spending money as if there was no tomorrow. Francis sought quiet places where he could pray and opportunities to serve the Church and the poor. Over time, he gave up all thoughts of riches and began to help out, wherever he could, in exchange for a meal and a place to rest.

Francis found joy in simple things, the birds of the air, the company of a friend, a job well done. He was so happy that other young men began to join him, living as he did, giving their lives to God and all those who needed help.

Stories about St. Francis often include stories about his love for creation. In one, he was walking along a trail with some of his friends, noticing the birds in the trees. Francis stopped and began to speak to the birds about the wonders of God and how God created all things good. The birds sat and listened and one of them even landed on his shoulder, to the surprise of all his friends.

In another story, Francis was travelling near a certain town that was plagued by a wolf. On seeing the wolf in the forest, Francis began to speak to the wolf with gentle words. The story even goes on to say how Francis persuaded the wolf to leave the town people alone and how he persuaded the town people to leave some food for the wolf in the forest.

Because of his simplicity of life, his care for creation and his love for the poor, St. Francis has become the patron saint of the environment and our role as protectors of the Earth. At this time of year, we remember his wonderful example by being happy with fewer things, doing something to help the environment and showing our care and concern for animals. In some parishes they celebrate a special blessing for pets on his feast day, October 4<sup>th</sup>.



### **Parenting Corner:**

This is a wonderful time of the year to focus on God's creation. You may want to focus on one or more of these projects.

- Go on a nature walk with your child(ren). A possible conversation starter: "What fascinates you about creation?"
- Spend some time cleaning up the yard for Winter. You may want to focus on one or two ways we help nature (i.e. cutting back old growth, digging up/planting bulbs, raking leaves, putting mulch around perennials, etc.)
- Harvest some late season vegetables.
- Work on a family Fall collage using fallen leaves, dried flowers, seeds and other found objects.
- Clean up the garbage along a particular trail, stream or street.
- Make a birdfeeder or birdhouse out of a milk container or some other disposable container. Touch it up with some colour.
- Spend some quality time with your pets/domesticated animals.
- Sort through a closet and talk about ways to reduce, re-use and recycle.

### **Prayer: St. Francis' Cantic of Creation (adapted for children):**

O Most High and all-powerful good Lord, to you belong praise, glory, honour and all blessing.

I praise you Lord for all creation, and especially for our brother Sun, who brings us the day and the light.

I praise you, Lord, for Sister Moon, and for all the stars, which you have set shining and lovely in the heavens.

I praise you, Lord, for our Brothers Wind and Air and every kind of weather.

I praise you, Lord, for Sister Water, for she is lively, precious and pure.

I praise you, Lord, for Brother Fire, through whom you give us light and heat.

I praise you, Lord, for Sister Earth our Mother, who nourishes us and sustains us with fruits and vegetables of many kinds and colourful flowers to delight us.

I praise you, Lord, for those who forgive for love of you, who take care of others in their need.

I praise you, Lord, for those who bear sickness and hurt with patience and hope, who trust in you with their lives.

I praise you, Lord, and bless you; I thank you for all that you have made.

**You may want to write your own Cantic of Thanksgiving to God (or draw a picture).**



### **Blessing of Pets:**

Song: All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing,

O, praise him! Alleluia!

Thou burning sun with golden beam, thou silver moon with softer gleam,

O, praise him! O, praise him! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Prayer:

Lord God, Creator of all that is good, we come before you to ask for your blessing on this (these) animal(s) who serve as our companions in life. Bless them with good health and grant them happiness and peace in our presence. Help us to tend to them as best we can. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading from Genesis 1: 24 – 26

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle, and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind. And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." (And it was so.)

The Word of the Lord,                   **Thanks be to God.**

Prayers of the Faithful:

Let us pray for all God's creatures entrusted to our care, we pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Let us pray that they be healthy and happy, we pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Let us pray that they may bring joy and peace into our home, we pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Bless each animal with the sign of the cross (or with Holy Water).

Pray the "**Our Father**" together.

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, how wonderful you are above all creation. Look after us and our pets and help us to be good tenants of all that you have entrusted to us, through Christ our Lord. Amen.